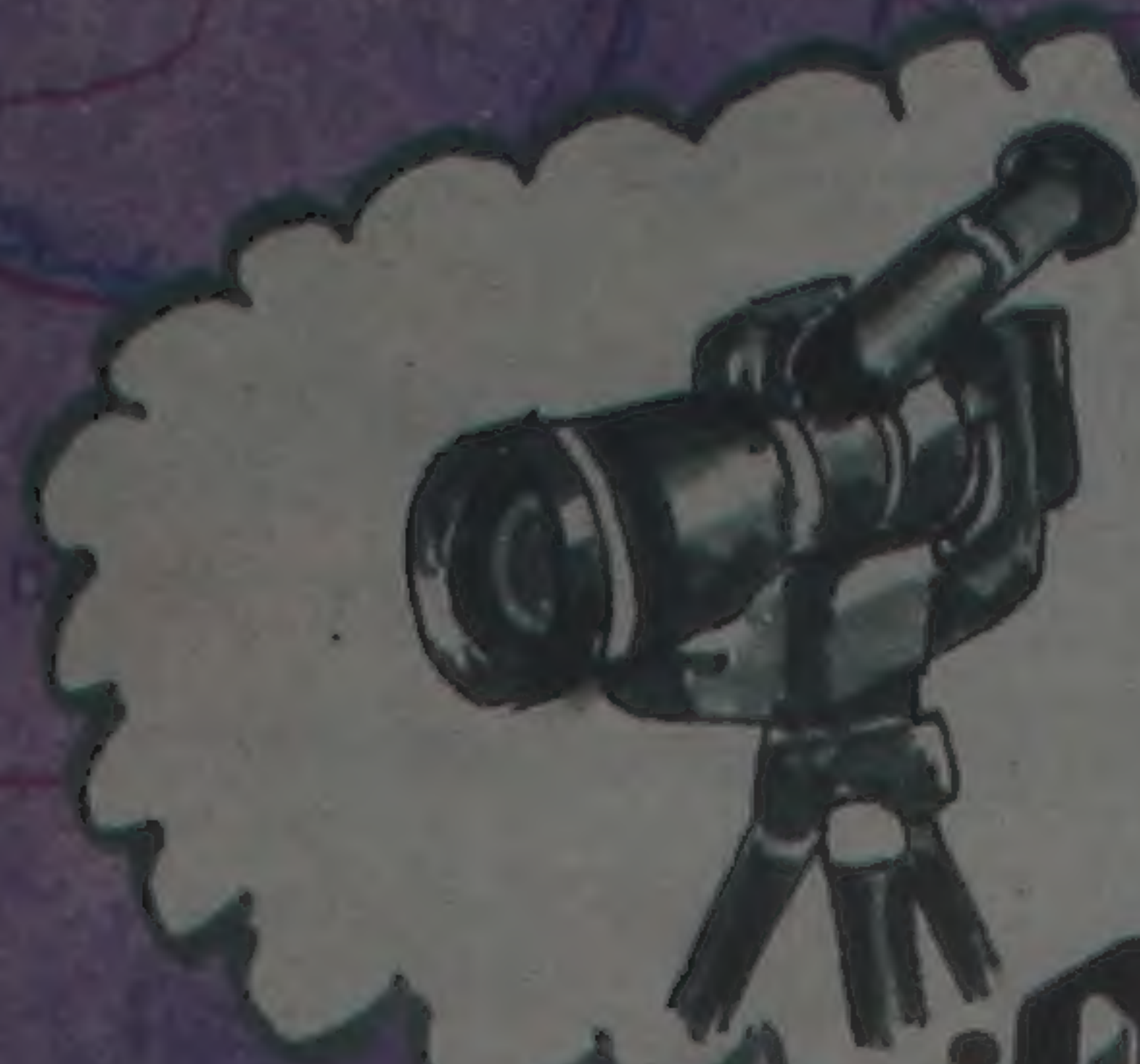


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Nina Davanport's Iraq War metaphor leads live's coverage of the Global Visions Film Fest / 41

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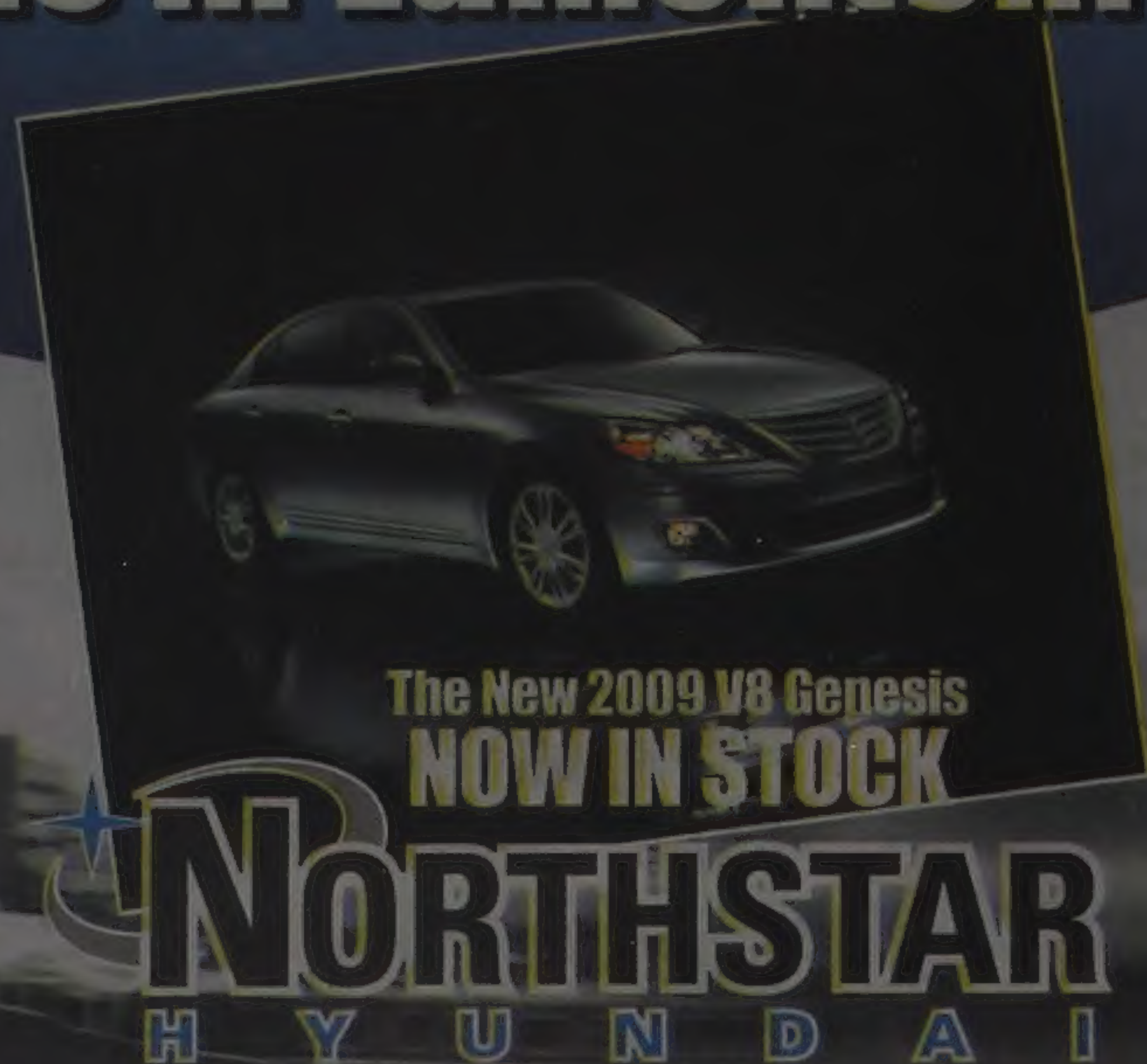
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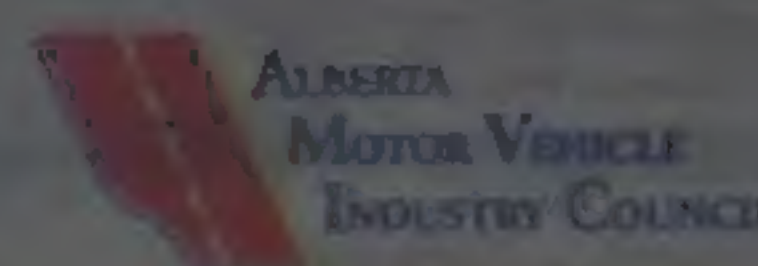
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VUE WEEKLY

FRONT 6

VUEPOINT	6
WELL, WELL, WELL	8
ISSUES	8
DYER STRAIGHT	10
NEWS ROUNDUP	11
IN THE BOX	12
INFINITE LIVES	12
BOB THE ANGRY FLOWER	12

DISH 13

GREAT HEAD	17
------------	----

ARTS 37

HOPSCOTCH	39
-----------	----

FILM 41

FILM CAPSULES	43
DVDETECTIVE	44

MUSIC 47

ENTER SANDOR	49
BACKLASH BLUES	50
NEW SOUNDS	38
OLD SOUNDS	58
QUICKSPINS	59

BACK 60

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY	60
QUEERMONTON	61
ALT SEX COLUMN	63

WEEKLY LISTINGS

ARTS	40
FILM	45
MUSIC	48
EVENTS	61

ON THE COVER



OPERATION FILMMAKER 16

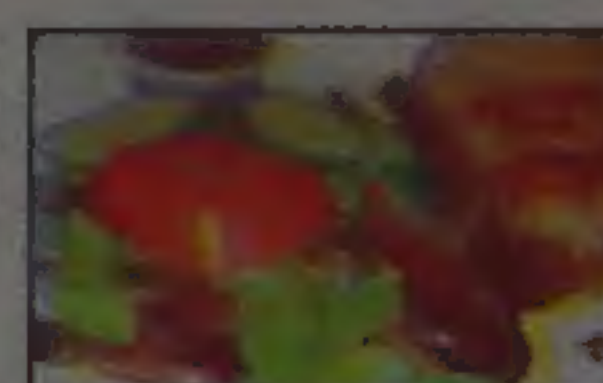
The Iraq War metaphor that was Muthana Mohmed's experience working on *Everything is Illuminated* leads our coverage of the 2008 Global Visions Film Fest

FRONT



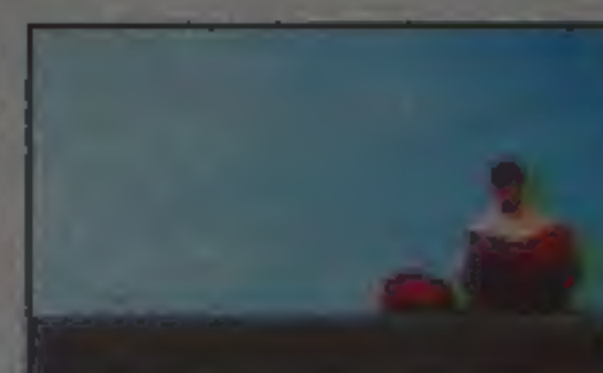
BLOODY LUCKY? 7

DISH



V'S FOR PIES 13

LEARN



EDUCATION 18

ARTS



MIDSUMMER 37

FILM



RACHEL GETTING MARRIED 46

MUSIC



CHRIS CORNELL 47

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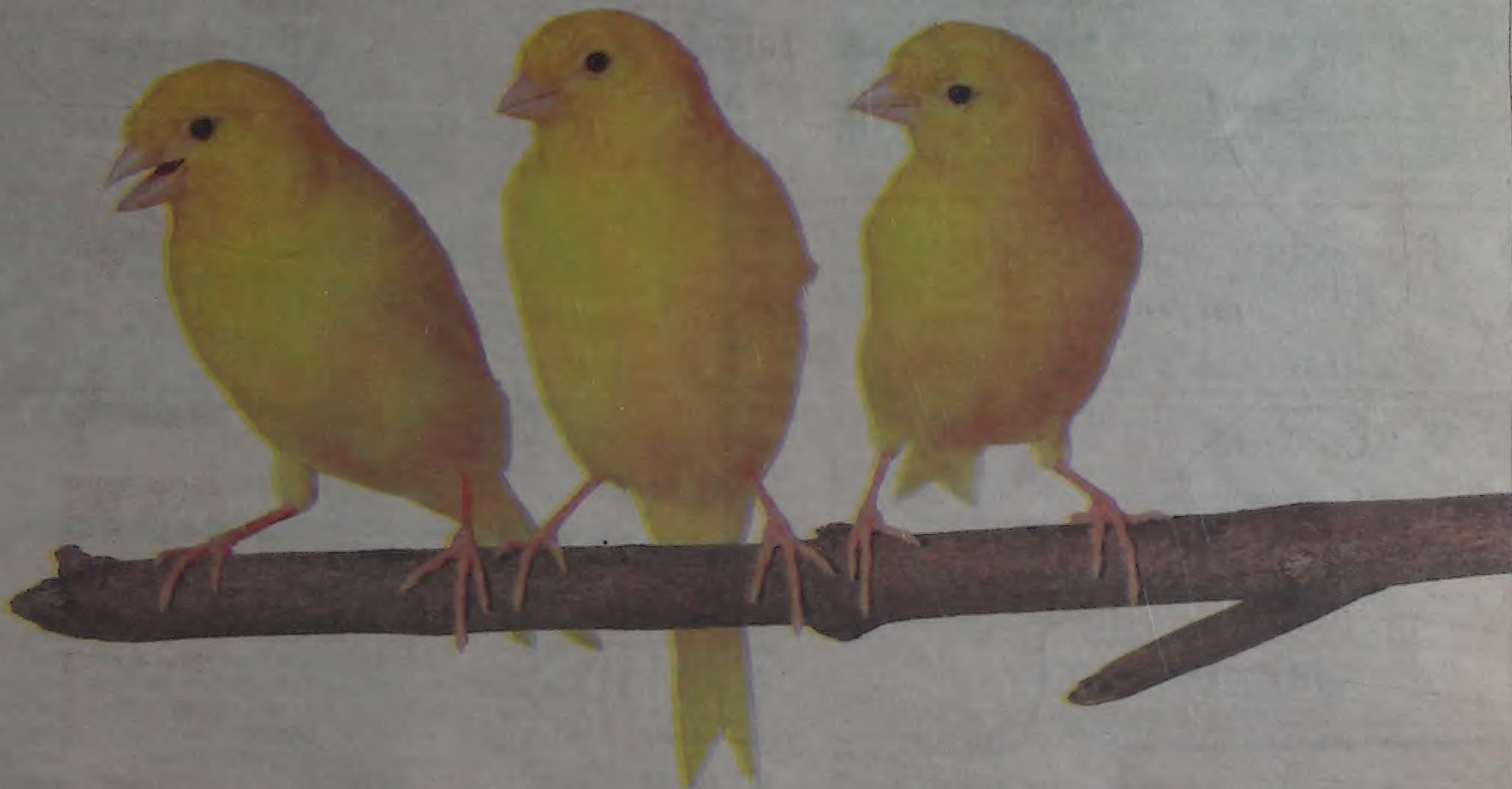
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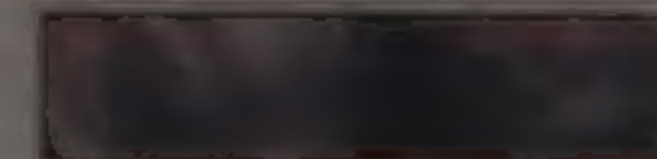
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VUEWEEKLY



Historic, change, etc

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

There's no question that Barack Obama's landslide victory to become the first African-American president of the United States is an historic and important event for both the US and the world.

Obama's victory represents an important milestone in the incredible multi-generational popular struggle against the still-prevalent racism upon which the country was founded. His youth, stirring oratory, vision of hope and the promise of change undeniably struck a chord with Americans in a way not seen in a generation. This was evident not only in the passion of his supporters but in the scale of his victory.

After the long nightmare of the George W. Bush administration and the damage it has wrought around the globe—the erosion of civil liberties, the expansion of the American empire, a global economy reeling from the economic turmoil brought on by the neoliberal policies Bush embodied—Obama does offer hope.

But despite it all there are some realities which must be faced as we look forward to the next four years. Many of Obama's policies are, to put it bluntly, terrible. He supports clean coal, considers nuclear power a viable option, looks at Canada's energy as part of America's domestic supplies, will expand the war in Afghanistan and likely Pakistan, doesn't question America's right to unilaterally hunt down and kill individuals it deems to be terrorists, has moved away from his earlier principled stand on Palestine by embracing Israel and promising to continue military aid, accepted unprecedented donations from corporations, and on and on.

At the same time, he adopts an economically devastated economy and a deeply divided and backward nation. Almost 56 million Americans supported McCain/Palin despite, or because of, their hateful campaign. Bans on gay marriage passed in Arizona and Florida and look likely to pass in California. Nebraska voted to end affirmative action. Gay couples will no longer be able to adopt children in Arkansas.

The greatest hope for the Obama presidency is that the grassroots movement that propelled him to victory will remain organized and powerful enough to pull him towards more progressive policies, and hold him to his promising rhetoric in the face of American hubris and corporate influence. Yes they can. ▽



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T: 780.426.1996 / F: 780.426.2889 / E: office@vueweekly.com / W: vueweekly.com

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: RON GARTH / ron@vueweekly.com
 NEWS EDITOR: SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com
 ARTS / FILM EDITOR: DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com
 MUSIC EDITOR: EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com
 DISH EDITOR: DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com
 OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDITOR: JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vueweekly.com
 ASSOCIATE MUSIC EDITOR: BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER: LYLE BELL / lyle@vueweekly.com
 CREATIVE SERVICES MANAGER: MICHAEL SIEK / mika@vueweekly.com
 GRAPHIC DESIGNER: VIKKI WIERCINSKI / vikki@vueweekly.com
 LAYOUT / DESIGN: CHRIS BOSCHMAN / boschman@vueweekly.com

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 WEB / MULTIMEDIA MANAGER: TREVOR KJORLIEN / trevor@vueweekly.com
 COLUMN ILLUSTRATION: SEAN BURCHERT / burchert@shaw.ca

CONTRIBUTORS: Ricardo Acuña, Paul Blinov, Josef Braun, Rob Brezney, Jonathan Busch, Xanthie Couture, Kristina de Guzman, Gwynne Dyer, Jason Foster, Brian Gibson, James Grisdal, Jan Hostyn, Whitney Houston, Connie Howard, Lewis Kelly, Sherry Dawn Knettle, Maria Kotovych, Hanne Lynch, Omar Mouallem, Andrea Nemerson, Carolyn Nikodym, Stephen Notley, Mary Christa O'Keefe, Roland Pemberton, TB Player, Bob Prodor, Sheena Rossiter, Steven Sandoz, Bryan Saunders, Chris Thrall, David Young, Darren Zenko

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MAIL LETTERS

DION, NOT TORIES, TO BLAME

Much has been made of the big, bad Conservative party and their skill and money spent hammering the other parties and especially Mr Dion ("The green shaft," Oct 23 - Oct 29, 2008). There has been a consistent subtext of spleen from people who think that the issues have been framed and distorted to the advantage of the Conservatives and to the detriment of the other parties. And? That is just about the definition of success in our political process: the party best able to shape the public-policy narrative, including removing climate change and carbon tax proposals from the debate, wins. The way to beat the Conservatives might have been to shift the ground on them and to popularize, or secularize as need be, the idea of collective green-guilt, effectively moving what is a moral belief among many about the need to act on reducing carbon emissions to a political issue centering on a responsible consumption tax policy.

That didn't happen this time around, but maybe it will in the future. But there is no reason that it will happen because it should, or that it must happen because Canada looks disgraceful to Europe when it doesn't craft progressive environmental legislation. Argument can combat rhetoric, better ideas can win

the day, but not until there is an audience to listen to those ideas. Very few Canadians cared about the subtleties that Mr Dion was communicating because, in the end, he didn't understand how to frame his main issue.

CONNOR HOULIHAN

SHORT, NOT TERRIBLY SWEET

I'll make this short. Regarding Connie Howard's recent column ("Who's skeptical of the skeptics," Oct 2 - Oct 9, 2008): facts are kinda useful.

TOKORONA SHINJITSU

NOT EASY FOR A NANNY

I agree with Karen Hughes about the need to consider those nurses who already live in Canada working as nannies just to be able to practice as a nurse in the future, instead of looking outside the country ("Can the Philippines solve the growing nursing crisis in Alberta?," Apr 24 - Apr 30, 2008).

I myself came to Canada in 2002 and worked as a nanny. We often have to change employers for many reasons, and have to go again through the process of applying to immigration for our work permits which takes almost three months, prolonging the 24 months of live-in caregiver we need to complete. We are paid about five dollars and few cents an hour, then taxes and health insurances or Blue Cross are deducted, which leaves us only a few dollars. What if we are married

and have kids to look after back home? Before entering Canada we paid huge amounts of money and went through a lot of interviews and processing which required huge expenses. So for the first few months all the hard-earned money goes to the payments of these agency fees or processing fees.

What is also very frustrating is that I applied for my refresher course, and because I am not yet a landed immigrant, as the processing is kinda slow, I had to apply as an international student, meaning I have to pay the fee as an international student. As a nanny earning little money, I had to borrow money. Despite all of it I still went to school and get my exams one at a time whenever I have the money to pay. I'm dismayed trying to get my nursing career going.

Now the government has many programs paying nurses to go to school, flying them over here at no charge, offering free accommodation. How about us who have gone through difficult times and circumstances, are they going to reimburse the money we spent all the way through, the frustrations, the emotional effects?

ESTHER LYNN LONGATO

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

Bloody lucky or bloody pointless?

Province's graphic approach to making young workers safer draws criticism for missing important information

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuwweekly.com

In one video a young woman cleaning a gas station bathroom pulls a bottle of industrial cleaner down from a high shelf, dousing herself in caustic liquid that burns the skin from her face and sends her screaming in panic past customers and co-workers. In another video a young male deli clerk, preoccupied with an attractive female customer, slices his hand in a meat cutter, spraying blood and sending the end of his finger flying onto a pile of salami.

They're just two of a series of graphic new videos produced by the Alberta government that began running in movie theatres and online on October 29 as part of a public awareness campaign aimed at alerting young Albertans about health and safety risks in the workplace.

The campaign was set to launch in the fall of 2007 but was delayed because of complaints from some MLAs about their graphic content.

Barrie Harrison, a spokesperson with Alberta Employment and Immigration, says the point of using such graphic examples—which are based on actual workplace incidents in the province—is to grab the attention of young workers and get them thinking and talking about the dangers they face at work.

"[The message is] that injuries can and do happen. We've found going way back to the beginning of this campaign through focus group testing that young workers feel that these are the types of things that don't happen, and if they do they happen to somebody else," Harrison says. "We're trying to get the message across that they do indeed happen to you and to your colleagues."

He says the government is targeting the 15 to 19 age demographic because they are more likely to be injured on the job, explaining that young workers make up just 17 per cent of the provincial workforce but account for 23 per cent of injuries.

Harrison says the \$850 000 six-week campaign, which also includes ads in bus shelters, on transit and in restaurants and bars, is intended to drive traffic to the campaign website, bloodylucky.ca, which contains information about how to avoid workplace accidents.

"We want to get the message across

NEWS LABOUR

to young workers that they have rights and responsibilities in the workplace. They have questions that they should be asking their boss and these five questions are listed on the website."

The questions include basics such as "How can I get injured doing my job?" and "What safety procedures do I need to follow?"

But Mark Wells, a communications officer with the Alberta Union of Public Employees, says that the whole campaign falls short because it doesn't give young workers the right information they need to stay safe at work.

"We think that they've left out a really key component in educating young workers. Young workers need to know that they've got the right to refuse unsafe work and that they have the right to refuse that work and not fear any disciplinary action from their employer," Wells says. "You don't have to choose between unsafe work and no job at all. There's an obligation for them to say 'I'm not going to do this work. I have a right to safe work.' It's the employer's duty actually to provide the employee with safe work until they've resolved whatever hazard they employee thinks is on that site. And this is a big component that's missing from the campaign."

Kevin Flaherty, the executive director of the Alberta Workers' Health Centre, says that while he's glad the ads have finally seen the light of day and thinks they're a positive step, he agrees they're flawed in their approach.

"The campaign has limited goals, but raising awareness of the hazards of work, especially among young workers, is a good objective," Flaherty says. "Unfortunately at least two elements of the campaign and the videos will likely reinforce the misguided, but fairly commonly held notion, that a worker's own behaviour in a given situation explains what happened."

"The director of the videos chose to try to engage the target audience by having the actors reflect and reinforce stereotypes of youth behaviour: distracted, unengaged, unmotivated, resentful of work, and this takes the viewer away from the background ele-

ments of the story which may provide clues to what is really going on—the 'root cause analysis' if you want to use the health and safety term. Secondly, because the videos are shown in theatres and they're free-standing, they don't benefit from any critical discussion and there's no way of pointing to the non-behaviour elements of the videos, and so it conspires to reinforce that same notion again."

FLAHERTY SAYS its important to realize that a worker's behaviour in any situation happens in the context of things the worker can't change: how the work is structured, the pace of work, the tools used at work and other decisions which are under the control of employers, who, Flaherty points out, are absent from the scenarios depicted in the ads.

He points to the example of a distracted young woman working in a shoe store who goes up a ladder in high heels to get a box of shoes and pulls the stock down on herself.

"Everyone focuses on her distracted attitude, but the reality is, the context is, what are these people encouraged to wear at work? We focus on her high-heeled shoes going up this rickety ladder, but it's a rickety ladder and the storage system is obviously inadequate—there should be proper stairs or a ladder system so it doesn't really matter what kind of shoes she's wearing when she's climbing up there, if she has to climb up at all. That whole piece of the rickety ladder and having to reach and all that kind of stuff is just bad work design—that's what you need to be drawn to," he says.

"Then the other thing is the supervision. Where's somebody saying, 'I'll help you with this.' Who does she account to? To whom does she say, 'This ladder is crap. I can't get up here and do this safely, I'm not doing it.' That whole process is missing there."

DESPITE THE CRITIQUES, Harrison defends the approach the ads take, and doesn't feel that leaving out information about, for example, the right to refuse, lessens the campaign's effectiveness.

"From the very beginning in the development of this campaign we wanted to make it as clear as possible that this isn't about assigning



blame. We know that both employers and employees and industry and safety associations and government all have a role to play when it comes to workplace health and safety," he contends.

"We need to take some small steps and ensure that [young workers] understand for starters that these injuries can happen, that they need to operate safely and they need to work with their employer," Harrison continues. "I think when it comes to the right to refuse unsafe work it's something that's kind of part and parcel—it might not be spelled out directly to the 15 to 19 year-olds, but first and foremost we want to make sure we get their attention and then we'll be continuing to build on this campaign as the months and years progress to make sure that we hit all the messages that we want to."

Despite his criticisms about the campaign's approach, Flaherty thinks the videos could be valuable tools in the right hands, and would consider

using them himself to help educate young workers about workplace safety.

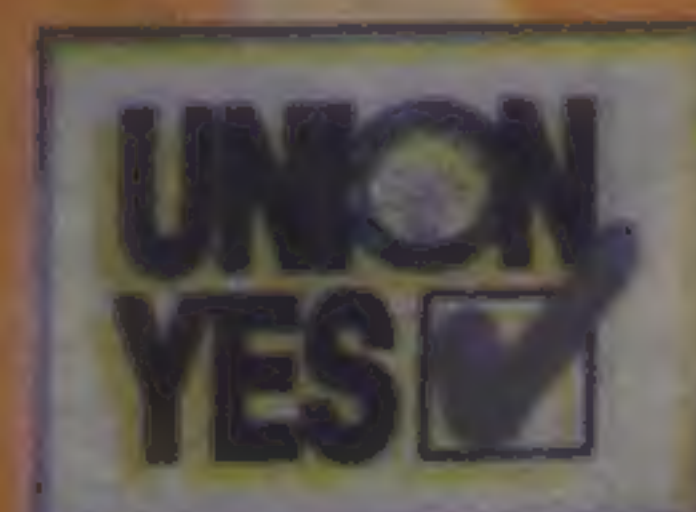
"I know that given to the right people with a good backup of resource material, these videos could be fairly effective," he says. "Stories are never a bad thing, the discussion is never a bad thing. It's how do we deal with that discussion and how do we get the critical tools, the tools for critical analysis of those discussions out there? And so without those it is a flawed piece, no question. But when you strip away the editorial direction in the videos and the stories themselves could be quite insightful."

Even considering the campaign as it stands, Flaherty is glad it's being seen rather than gathering dust on a government shelf somewhere.

"It's bound to do some good. Does it do \$850 000 worth of good? That's a different question. Could you do different things with what same amount of money that might be more engaging? Probably. Is it bad that they spent it? Not really. Even as flawed as it is." ▀

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WELL, WELL, WELL
CONNIE HOWARD
health@vancouverweekly.com

On my mind today are some thoughts on Sarah Palin, fruit fly research, mood disorders, James Randi and an example of an effective alternative therapy supported by solid—albeit small-scale—double-blind science.

Sarah Palin's recent (and telling) comment that money earmarked for research ends up being used for "things like fruit fly research in Paris, France. I kid you not," got me thinking about Dr Berridge, whose research with fruit flies brought us lithium for bipolar disorder.

Dr Robert Belmaker, a psychiatrist, has been very interested in Dr Berridge's work with lithium, and as lithium affects inositol concentrations in the brain, in the therapeutic potential of inositol with mood disorders. Inositol, essential to healthy nervous system functioning, is a nutrient found in the fibre components of whole grains, citrus fruits, nuts, seeds and meat. Bacteria in our systems have the job of making it bio-available and accessible to the central nervous system.

Nutritionists are fond of saying we get all the inositol we need in our food. But those avoiding whole grains, and those with impaired digestion may not be getting enough. Given how many of us are gluten intolerant, and how many of us use antibiotics or other drugs known to alter bacterial balance and digestion, the numbers of us likely to have low levels of the nutrient in our systems is, I'm guessing, much higher than we suspect.

Measures of inositol in spinal fluid have confirmed low concentrations in those suffering with mood disorders, and Dr Belmaker's posthumous research with donated brains found very low concentrations in those previously diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

His double-blind, placebo-controlled research with inositol found daily doses of 12 to 18 grams orally "to be as beneficial

as anti-depressants used in depression, panic disorders and in obsessive-compulsive disorders." Other research has demonstrated it to be as helpful with eating disorders as it is with mood disorders.

SO WHY HAVEN'T most of us heard about this, and why isn't more research money going in these directions? It's got nothing to do with them not being valid therapies to research, and everything to do with the fact that expensive research on inexpensive, non-patentable compounds isn't a good investment.

Whether we're talking about single nutrients that affect brain function, or therapies like Truehope's EMPowerplus (a vitamin and mineral supplement that has had astounding success treating mood disorders including full-blown and serious bipolar disorder in preliminary research), the point is that these are directions that have great potential to curb the current epidemic of out-of-control children, weeping or panicky moms, suicidal or violent youth, and a generally insomniac, stressed, irritable and depressed population.

But discouraging natural therapies as promising as this is, sadly, what Health Canada has been actively doing, ostensibly for our safety, even though therapies like EMPowerplus have proven themselves to be extraordinarily safe.

And suppression of effective natural therapies is what we'll likely continue to see for a while yet to come—Bill C-51 is being revived—even though psychiatric meds come with serious cancer, addiction and suicide risks, and even though the relapse rate for those on psychiatric meds is high, and even though thousands of us are seriously injured by them each year, and even though hundreds of published papers in the literature show nutrient deficiencies to be linked to brain dysfunction.

As one friend suggested yesterday, if James Randi has a million dollars burning a hole in his pocket maybe he could contribute it to this kind of research rather than waiting for someone to present large-scale gold-standard evidence on the efficacy of an alternative therapy. ▀

ISSUES

Issues is a forum for individuals and organizations to comment on current events and broader issues of importance to the community. Their commentary is not necessarily the opinion of the organizations they represent or of *Vue Weekly*.

Time to push the envelope on EPCOR

City council should look at 're-municipalization' of services instead of turning over Gold Bar plant

RICARDO ACUÑA / ualberta.ca/parkland

Last week at city council, the city administration presented a report to councillors recommending that they transfer ownership and control of the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant to EPCOR. The deal they were recommending included a \$75 million "transfer fee" to be paid out by EPCOR over seven years, and projected increased revenue for the city of \$190 million over the next 10 years.

As a result of concerns expressed about the deal by numerous organizations, unions and individual Edmontonians, council decided that they could not make a decision on the recommendations without first holding a public hearing. Said public hearing will be held in late January or early February of 2009, and city council will make its decision immediately afterward.

The public discussions in the lead-up to last week's meeting focused on why this transfer would be a bad idea for the city of Edmonton. Statements looked at factors like loss of democratic control and accountability, loss of expertise and intellectual property that accompanies the Gold Bar centre of excellence, the potential for increased rates and lower service and the fact that the \$75 million transfer fee represented only about 10 per cent of the current market value of the plant.

All of these are important and valid concerns, and make an almost irrefutable case for why this transfer would not be in the public interest. It is also important, however, that the people of Edmonton take a close look at EPCOR itself, and in particular its motivations for seeking, yet again, to get its hands on a valuable city asset.

In 1999, after a motion in city council to sell EPCOR failed by one vote, council responded by officially corporatizing EPCOR. What this meant was structuring EPCOR as a private-for-profit corporation, with the City of Edmonton as the only shareholder. City council agreed to let EPCOR operate entirely at arms length without any representation on the board or senior management for city council or city management. EPCOR would operate entirely as a private utility provider—so much so that even the master agreement outlining the specifics of the relationship between the City and EPCOR is not accessible to the public because it is a confidential private document. Numerous freedom of information requests over the years have been unsuccessful in getting this document released.

As an arms-length corporation, EPCOR's operations are driven by the quest to maximize growth, profit and share value. Although a letter from EPCOR's Martin Kennedy to *Vue Weekly* last week implied that profit was not EPCOR's main motivator, EPCOR's corporate strategy, posted on their website, tells a different story: "con-

tinued growth," "acquisition and development of power and water assets," "optimizing and maximizing returns" and "growing cash flows" are the core elements of this strategy. Interestingly, keeping rates low, serving the public interest and prioritizing the environment over profit do not appear anywhere in the corporate strategy (although passing reference is made to limiting impact on the environment, which is clearly not the same as prioritizing the environment).

Today, EPCOR controls six subsidiary companies—one of which is traded publicly on the TSX—which build, operate and control power, water and drainage infrastructure and services across the United States and Canada. In other words, despite its roots as a public utility, EPCOR has based its growth on the privatization of utilities in cities and communities across the continent.

It is clear to see, therefore, that at least part of EPCOR's desire to acquire more of Edmonton's infrastructure is based purely and simply on its growth mandate. What corporation would pass up the opportunity to acquire \$750 million worth of assets for the clearance price of \$75 million? Having this kind of asset on its books would also make it much easier for EPCOR to borrow money in this tight credit market to help fund its continued growth and expansion in other markets. EPCOR's current ability to borrow is limited by its debt/equity ratio, a ratio which would change significantly with the transfer of any further city infrastructure.

The other factor that makes the Gold Bar plant appealing to EPCOR is the intellectual expertise that comes with the fact that the plant is a national centre of excellence and a world leader on wastewater treatment. This knowledge and expertise is something that is not included when the market value of the plant is calculated, but would bring huge marketability and profit to EPCOR in its bid to privatize the treatment facilities of other municipalities.

In short, therefore, EPCOR's quest for City of Edmonton assets is about being able to leverage its corporate growth, which is ultimately based on the privatization of utilities in communities outside Edmonton.

THE PEOPLE OF EDMONTON have shown time and time again that they believe fundamentally that the public interest is best served when utility services are publicly owned and administered for the public good. Why then do we continue to allow a utility company which we own to practice predatory privatization practices in other cities and communities? Imagine if Toronto city council decided to come in and make a bid to purchase our water,

power and drainage services—how would we react? If we wouldn't stand for someone else doing it to us, then we shouldn't be doing it to others.

Regardless of what happens with the Gold Bar plant, EPCOR will continue to seek to acquire other City of Edmonton assets because its growth imperative demands it. It also seems inevitable, given the rash of mergers and acquisitions in the market in recent years, that at some point in the near future, some multinational will make a bid to purchase EPCOR outright and city council will have to consider it. Given the close votes on privatization issues in the past, and the fact that quick injections of cash are always appealing to governments, there is a real danger that such a sale would be approved (remember Edmonton Telephones?). At that point, we would completely lose all of the assets that we have "transferred" to EPCOR over the years, and we would lose any semblance of control or oversight over how our utilities are managed and operated.

Given all of these factors, it is perhaps time for city councillors to once again consider something radically different. Perhaps it is time to take back control of its utilities—power and water—from EPCOR in what could be termed a re-municipalization of services. This would protect those utilities from future privatization, and would also mean that they could once again exclusively serve the public interest of Edmontonians instead of EPCOR's corporate ventures around the continent. Publicly owned utilities working for the public good of Edmontonians should be a compelling vision for all of us.

Then, if the city was still looking for a quick injection of cash, it could seek to sell EPCOR (without our utilities) on the open market. Even without Edmonton's utilities, EPCOR would easily generate more than \$75 million, and if we invested the proceeds properly, we would not even miss the portion of EPCOR's dividend generated from operations outside of Edmonton.

It seems to me that this option represents the best of all options for all involved: the city would get the injection of cash it is looking for, the people of Edmonton would regain democratic control of their utilities in the public interest, EPCOR would be free from the limitations of being publicly owned and City of Edmonton assets would no longer be used to leverage the privatization of utility services elsewhere.

It's time to push city council to push the envelope on EPCOR, before it's too late. ▀

Ricardo Acuña is executive director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta.

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Ex-pats celebrate Obama victory

ELECTION
DISPATCH
BARRON ZENKO
dispatch@vancouverweekly.com

November 4, 2008—Kilkenny Pub, Calgary

By the time we arrive—highway-driving through the first meaningful snowfall of the season—at the Election Night festivities (and/or teeth-gnasheries; the polls, as they say, could be wrong) hosted by the Calgary chapter of Democrats Abroad, it's 7 pm and CNN has already pasted red and blue stickers over a quarter of its onscreen American Geography Activity Book: 49 McCain, 174 Obama.

There's a positive, chatty, oh-my-God-it's-happening vibe running through the gathered expat Dems, but nobody's popping corks just yet; too many of them remember this very room four years ago, the night of Four More Tears. There's practical worry, too: they've already moved to Canada; what more drastic step might they take given a McCain/Palin victory? And if even a tenth of their co-partisans still at home make good on their threat/promises, will they have to book a bigger venue in 2012?

The Kilkenny is a dire sort of place, choked with platinum-level bar-in-a-box pseudo-Eire set decoration, plaques offering "Haberdashery" and "Aran Knitware" labelling shelves groaning with crock pots



and old washboards. But it's big, with lots of flat-screen acreage for Wolf Blitzer's grizzled face; Obama posters fit nicely over the reproduction Guinness ads, and the red-shirted staff—there's a Flames game on, hockey fans relegated to the pub's outer reaches where the TVs are smaller—do their overworked best to hustle tray after overloaded tray out to a hundreds-strong crowd thirsty and hungry for booze and snacks as much as Change. For some reason, every second table is ordering deep-fried seafood, and the place smells like a fishmarket with faulty air conditioning; is this some kind of East Coast Elites thing?

Blackberries and iPhones glow everywhere in the hands of folks too eager for

information to wait for CNN's near-instantaneousness; I start hearing eager mutters and mumbles—"He's got it. He's got it."—five seconds or so before the big screen shows the Ohio projection and the crowd goes hug-nuts. Helen, a professor of dance, a native Marylander and a Clinton supporter in the primaries, is glad the end of nearly two years of vicious campaigning and eight years of What We've Been Through—the word "Bush" is rarely spoken here, as if to name him would be to bring malocchio upon the night, the nation, the world—is at hand: "It's been an embarrassment, especially living in Canada," she says with a relieved kind of "can-you-believe-it" expression. "Calgary feels Republican, but I look around and you've got gay marriage, abortion rights, health care."

The reality of Calgary is the dream for an Obama America.

OUTSIDE WITH THE SMOKERS, a mix of Americans and Canadian partners of Americans shelter from the wet snow under an overhang, exchanging lights and horror stories of border-crossing hassles: suspicion, accusation, visa runarounds, the necessity of crossing the border in a "clean" car devoid of anti-Bush signifiers. They're all hoping a slackening in the TERROR TERROR Fortress America paranoid border-security theatre of the Bush ... sorry, of the last eight years, will make things easier for them, personally, even as it makes things easier for "everybody in the fucking world." A guy in a ain't-I-a-zany-contrarian

Dennis Kucinich T-shirt is having a heated, whisper-shouted cellphone argument over by the dumpster, hunched against the falling damp.

Back inside, where a cheer goes up when CNN shows the Minnesota senate race going to Al Franken—although the race is now headed for a recount—things have thinned out a bit, as in the third period of a hockey game when the home team's up 5-1 and people start worrying about traffic. The drinking hasn't slackened much, though; shots and shots and shots and pints are coming out fast and furious, the tables glittering with piles of unbussed glassware at 9 pm as the mega-plasma and its satellite screens flash the fateful graphic: BARACK OBAMA ELECTED PRESIDENT. Cheers, tears, screams, ferocious hugs ... my spine is battered by mighty back-slaps eight years coming. An older gent with eyes welling up: "This is the first time the person I voted for won." (He skipped the Clinton years.)

The president-elect steps out to address America, the camera cutting every two minutes to Jesse Jackson's face, soaked with emotion. Obama tempers jubilation with words like "hard" and "sacrifice" and I catch glances exchanged between some of the celebrants; they remember Carter. I ask one younger guy about that, about the shitwreck Obama's going to be wading through in the first hundred hours, let alone the first hundred days.

"No, man, no," he shakes his head. "Just let us have a couple months of joy."

TOP 10 RINGTONES

- 1) Britney Spears Womanizer
- 2) Katy Perry Hot N Cold
- 3) Beyonce If I Were A Boy
- 4) Rihanna Disturbia
- 5) T.I. Whatever You Like
- 6) Pink So What
- 7) Kanye West Love Lockdown
- 8) Lady GaGa Poker Face
- 9) Kevin Rudolf and Lil Wayne let it rock
- 10) Akon Right Now (Na Na Na)

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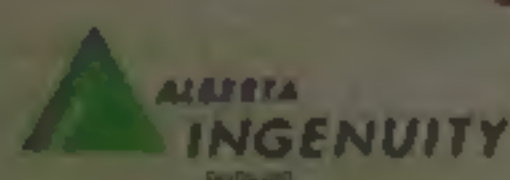
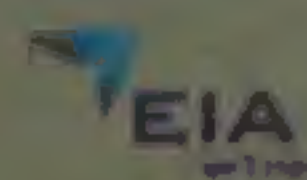


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Porcupines on a first date

No one knows where Taiwan-China relations are headed, but at least they're off to a good start

COMMENT

DYER STRAIGHT

GWYNNE DYER
gwynne@vueweekly.com

Mating is a notoriously tricky business for porcupines, but even the first date is an awkward transaction. Likewise for prickly customers like China and Taiwan: when a high-level Chinese delegation arrived in Taiwan on November 3 for landmark talks on closer relations, the Taiwan police even prevented people on the roads into Taipei from waving Taiwan flags in order not to hurt the visitors' feelings.

The two countries (or one country, if you prefer) broke apart almost 60 years ago, and until this week it was not even possible to travel directly between them: Taiwan-China flights had to go through Hong Kong, and ships had to stop off en route at the Japanese island of Okinawa. The 180-km-wide Taiwan Strait remains one of the most heavily militarized regions in the world, with an estimated 1300 Chinese missiles pointing at the island of Taiwan.

Even under the new government of President Ma Ying-jeou, which is committed to improving relations with the mainland, Taiwan keeps its defences up. Taipei recently signed its largest-ever arms deal with the US, agreeing on a \$6.5 billion package of guided missiles, attack helicopters and other advanced weaponry. Beijing retaliated by cancelling a series of scheduled meetings between Chinese and US generals—but it did not cancel the visit of Chen Yunlin, the most senior Communist official ever to set foot in Taiwan.

Chen is not formally a member of the Chinese government, because Beijing sees Taiwan as a renegade province, not a legitimate state. He is officially the head of a non-governmental organization called the Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait, and his host, Chiang Pin-kung, is the chairman of a similar Taiwanese NGO, the Straits Exchange Foundation. But that is just a charade to save everybody's face: this is really a serious encounter between two governments.

The first results of the encounter are already known: in future, cargo ships will be allowed to sail directly between Taiwanese and Chinese ports, and there will be over a hundred direct flights a week between cities in Taiwan and China. There are hopes, especially in Taiwan, that this will lead to greatly

increased trade between the two sides, and the next round of talks (which will be held every six months) will focus on closer financial ties as well.

But where is all this leading? Reunification? The opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan fears so, and a million of its supporters demonstrated against the meeting across Taiwan last week, but President Ma swears that he will make no moves that compromise Taiwan's sovereignty.

Well, then, could there be a permanent two-state solution in which Beijing and Taipei recognize each other as legitimate governments of independent countries? Beijing's leaders would rather die in a ditch, and so would many ordinary Chinese for whom the unity of the motherland is sacred. The truth is that neither side really knows the destination of this voyage, but they are nevertheless setting out together.

THERE HAVE BEEN great changes in China, where prosperity has soared and the ruling Communist Party has scrapped most of its ideology over the past quarter-century, but Taiwan has changed even more. Sixty years ago, after all, the Nationalist Party that ruled the island for so long was almost identical to the Communist Party in its structure, its nationalism and its authoritarian style.

Both parties were formed in the wave of nationalist fervour that swept China after the 1911 revolution overthrew the monarchy, and Chiang Kai-shek, who led the Nationalist Party for 50 years until his death in 1975, was just as autocratic as his great rival Mao Zedong, the leader of the Communist Party. But the Nationalists lost the civil war in 1949 and withdrew to Taiwan, where American sea-power pre-

vented the Communists from following, and so Taipei became the seat of the government-in-exile of the Republic of China.

That, at least, was how Chiang saw it, and he harshly suppressed any expressions of Taiwan separatism. His dream was to return to Beijing in triumph as the leader of a reunited China. But in the quarter-century after Chiang's death the Nationalist Party in Taiwan, while remaining dedicated to a united China in principle, gradually moved towards a fully democratic system—and so lost power in 2000 to a separatist party that wanted to declare an independent Taiwan.

There was genuine support for that goal in Taiwan, especially in the south, but it was never a real possibility: Beijing made it clear that a declaration of independence would trigger an invasion. So after eight years of economic stagnation and growing corruption, the separatist DPP lost power in last March's elections, and the Nationalists returned to power under Ma. They remain committed in principle to the reunification of China, but not under a Communist dictatorship.

Improving trade with China is very important to Taiwan, which has not done well economically in recent years: the average Taiwanese still earns about five times as much as the average mainland Chinese, but the gap is narrowing fast. However, closer political ties are more problematic, and the military still stand ready on both sides of the straits. The two governments may be setting off on a voyage to nowhere, but at least it has started well. ▽

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in Vue Weekly.



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Out of the Bush league

What will Obama mean for Canada?

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

January 20, 2009 will mark the end of the presidency of George W. Bush, as Barack Obama is officially sworn in as the 44th president of the United States.

The shift from the Bush presidency to the Obama presidency will have incredible ramifications for not only the U.S., but for an uncertain world in the throes of an economic crisis, dominated by a limping and incertiduous, indebted superpower. Canada in particular is affected by our proximity—both physical and economic—to the U.S. and the profound shift in relations with our southern neighbour as the political reality of our respective governments shift.

Discussing what this realignment might mean for Canada is the impetus behind an 18-city national tour currently underway by Steven Staples, the president of the Ottawa-based Rideau Institute, a public policy research and advocacy group which focuses on issues of human rights and security.

"Despite the fact that we've got another Conservative government—which most Canadians did not want—we are going to have a change in government in the United States and we need to be ready to take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself to further Canada's interests in terms of protecting the environment, promoting peace and creating a sustainable economy," Staples says.

While he welcomes the end of "eight long years of waiting out George Bush," Staples warns that a recent report by the Rideau Institute which analyzed both McCain and Obama's policies found that "an Obama administration would be mixed news for Canada."

"There will be lots of things to celebrate and there will be lots of things to look forward to," he says, pointing out that having a US administration that is committed to real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions could mean the Harper government will have no choice but to improve its own climate change policies.

"I think progressives and environmentalists will come together with some elements of Canadian business where there will be pressure on the government to come to some kind of understanding with the Americans on this," he says. "Canadian companies will not want to have two sets of standards in North America; they're going to want some predictability. So there will be pressure on the government to harmonize with the US model just by sheer size, and that would be a good thing, likely, for Canada because it would mean an improvement."

AT THE SAME TIME, Staples says he has serious concerns about what Obama's victory might mean for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan.

"Obama has made it very clear



PREVIEW

TUE, NOV 11 (7:30 PM)
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WHAT IS AT STAKE?**
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that he has been opposed to the invasion of Iraq, felt it was a distraction from a more proper mission which was to track down al-Qaeda and the Taliban, so he will withdraw US troops on a timeline from Iraq and transfer thousands of them to Afghanistan."

That strategic shift would likely put significant pressure on Canada to backtrack on its pledge to have troops out of the country by the end of 2011.

"What we've been saying to folks is that we've already seen indications that Obama will be expecting greater contributions to Afghanistan from the allies. We've already lost 97 soldiers, a diplomat, two aid workers, by the end of the war it'll be at least \$20 billion we'll have spent just in terms of government costs. But will Canadians be prepared to say no to Obama if he comes and says he needs more contributions to Afghanistan?"

At the same time, Staples warns that Canadians shouldn't think that additional US troops will mean a sudden improvement for prospects in Afghanistan.

"We're not trapped in a failing war in Afghanistan simply for the want of a few thousand more American troops—it's really a problem of the strategy. We need to move to a diplomatic solution, a solution that's not predicated on having thousands of more US troops just pursuing the same counterinsurgency mission that they've been doing up until now."

Despite his cautions, Staples is optimistic about the potential in an Obama presidency, and even sees an opportunity in the historic economic turmoil to pursue a new direction in Canada.

"It just seems like anything is possible now, when you have governments bailing out the banks and nationalizing financial institutions and whatnot," he says. "It just seems like we're turning over a new page and it's blank, it's yet to be written. While posing danger there's also great opportunity there as well." ▀

NEWS

ROUNDUP

EDMONTON WARDS TO CHANGE

City councillors voted October 29 in favour of replacing the city's current six-ward, two-councillor system with a new system of 12 wards. The current system has been in place since 1980, but ward populations have increased by approximately 50 per cent since then, which many councillors argue is unfair. A public hearing on the new ward system is slated for February 17, after which council will vote on a bylaw to move ahead with the change in time for the October 2010 municipal election.

Council also voted in favour of sending a letter to the province requesting an increase in municipal terms from the current three years to four

CITY TO PROCEED WITH EXPO BID

City council also October 29 unanimously agreed to spend \$2.3 million to proceed with the city's bid to be Canada's nominee to host Expo 2017. While the city expects the province to fund the balance of the \$4.5 million price tag, Premier Stelmach warned the following day that provincial funds aren't a sure thing in light of the current market turmoil. The cost of the entire bid process to the international level is estimated at \$22.5 million.

The cost to host a three-month Expo is estimated to be as high as \$2.3 billion, but a report says the event would attract 4.7 million visitors and bring \$2.6 billion in economic benefits. Proponents say it would also fast-track infrastructure projects

in the city, with the tab picked up by other levels of government

HARPER ANNOUNCES NEW CABINET

Prime Minister Stephen Harper unveiled on October 30 his new Cabinet, expanding the table from 32 ministers to 38, including 11 junior ministers. As expected, Jim Flaherty maintained his post as Minister of Finance and Peter Mackay retained the Defence portfolio. In a surprising move, Minister of Industry Jim Prentice was shuffled to Environment, replacing Jim Baird who moved to Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Tony Clement moves from Health to Industry, to replace Prentice, while first-time MP Leona Aglukkaq of Nunavut takes over the Health portfolio.

Alberta retained the same number of seats at the Cabinet table, with four ministers and two junior ministers. Only one Edmonton MP was tapped for a Cabinet post, with Ambrose moving from International Affairs to Labour.

—SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

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Political change for the common good

The masterpiece of *Fallout 3*

GAMES INFINITE LIVES

Hope this isn't going to be too grim for as you while away the time waiting for your friends to show up at the bar or ever you happen to be using this magazine, but I've been thinking about dead bodies a lot over the last couple of days. Corpses are as common as crates in video games, even if you don't count the varieties of walking dead that lumber (or leap; in games as in film, zombie agility is a contested variable) their way through the horror subgenres. It's a corollary of any medium whose works so frequently deal with killing. So when a game makes you really notice a corpse, well, it's a real accomplishment.

That's what happened to me playing *Fall-*

out 3, Bethesda Softworks' sequel in the venerated post-apocalyptic role-playing adventure series. I'm out in the wastelands, poking around the irradiated exurbs of this alternate-universe Washington, DC, doing the usual post-holocaust routine—scrounging for bullets, books, booze and anti-radiation tablets—when I come across a fucked-up old shack. Inside, amid the trash and debris, is a corpse in a bathtub. Whatever, right? In a place where millions died, bodies are even less special than usual. But look closer: at the head of the tub, layered thick with radioactive dust, a pile of empty whiskey bottles, inside the tub, barely recognizable through centuries of corrosion, a toaster. Goosebumps. In one moment, with a single wordless tableau, in an out-of-the-way corner of the map that might go unseen by 90 per cent of players, the designers managed to bring more emotional power—the despair of living in a ruined world—to their work than most games manage over the

course of 20 levels and 500 pages of script.

This isn't an isolated experience in *Fallout 3*, or even an uncommon one. In bringing their half-dead world to life, Bethesda's designers have made every corner of the space resonate with human presence, through wordless details like that bathtub suicide. From a janitorial closet in a derelict soda-bottling plant to the salons of the wasteland's last bastion of luxury living, this world feels inhabited.

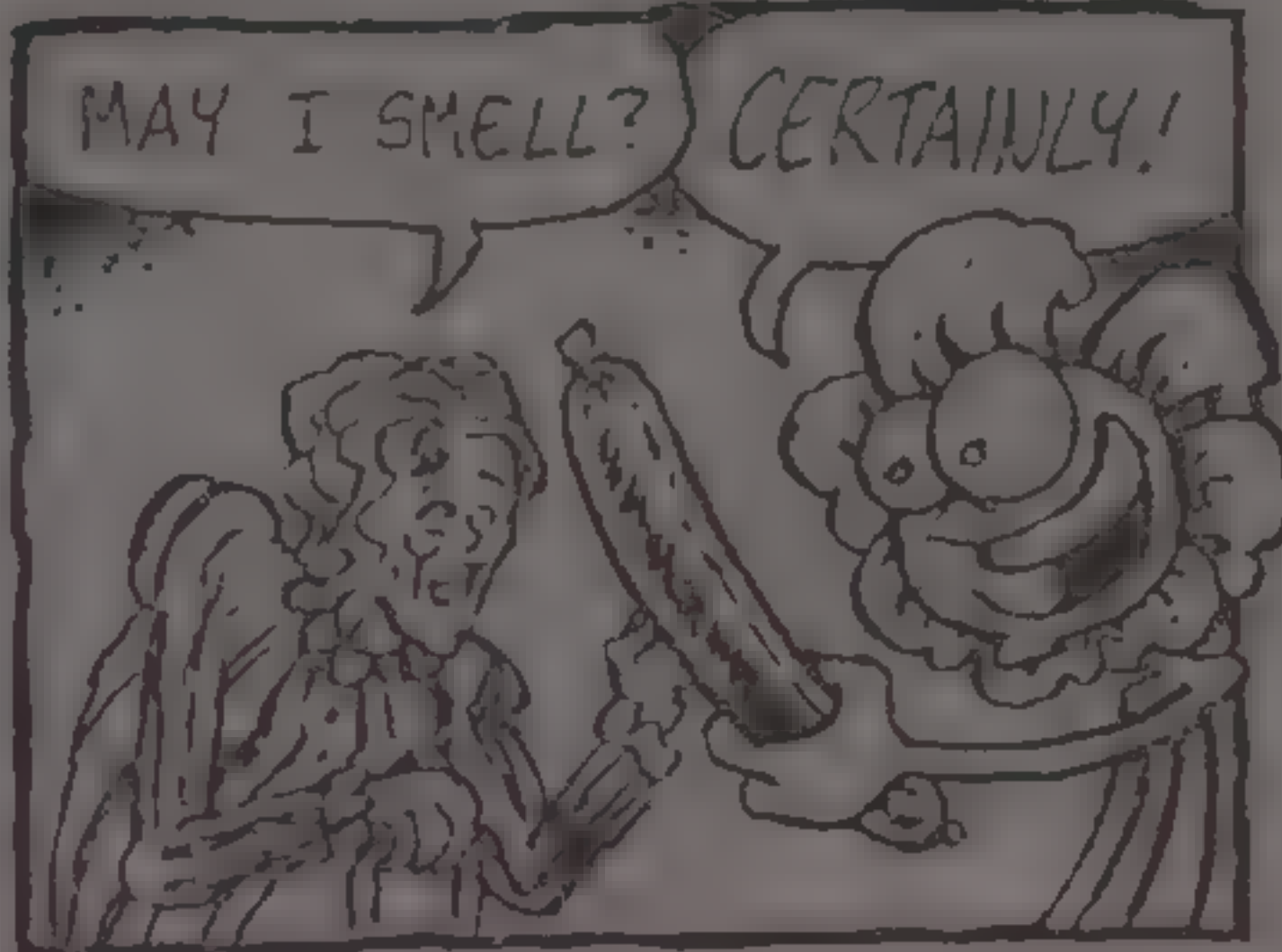
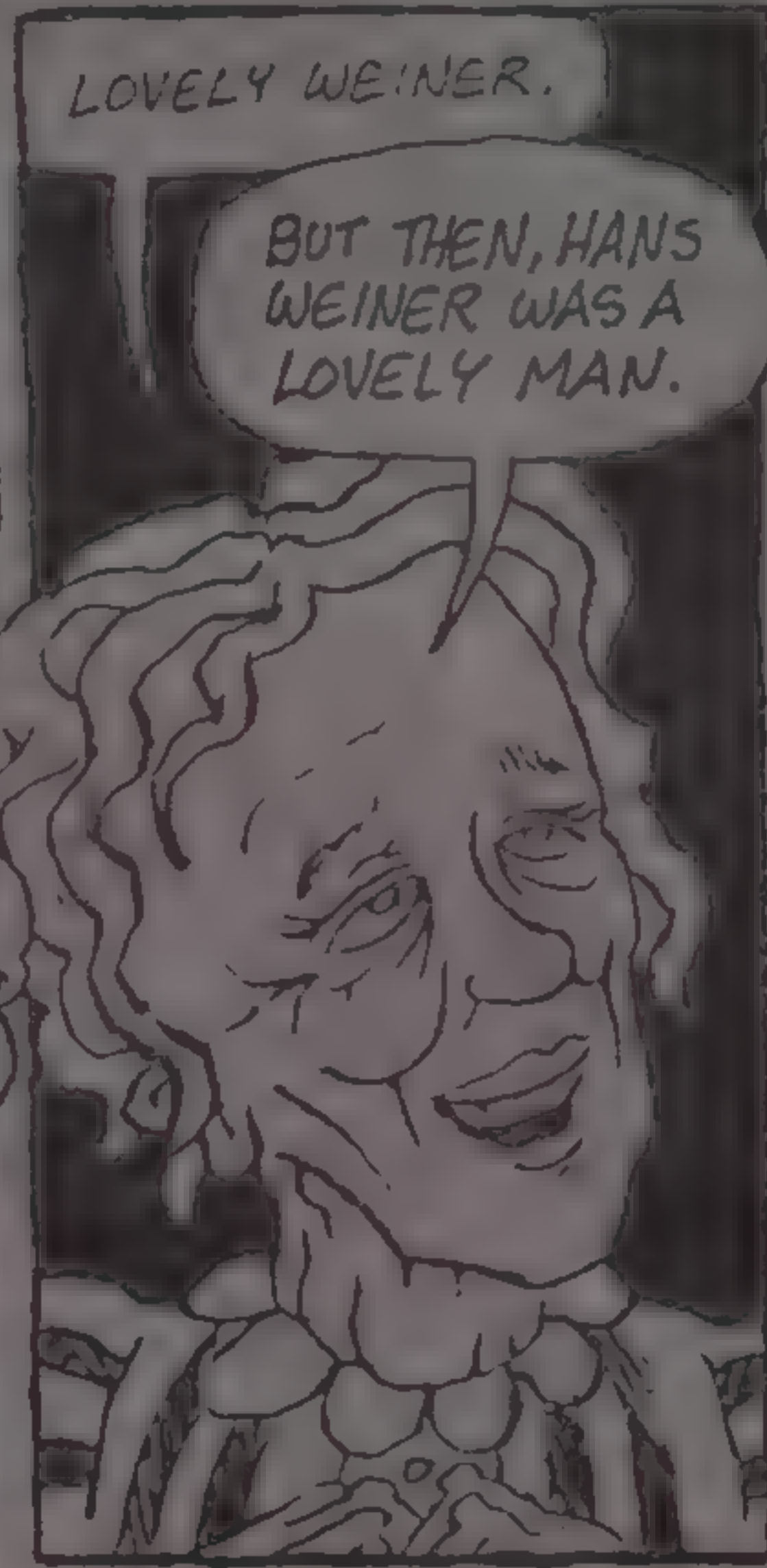
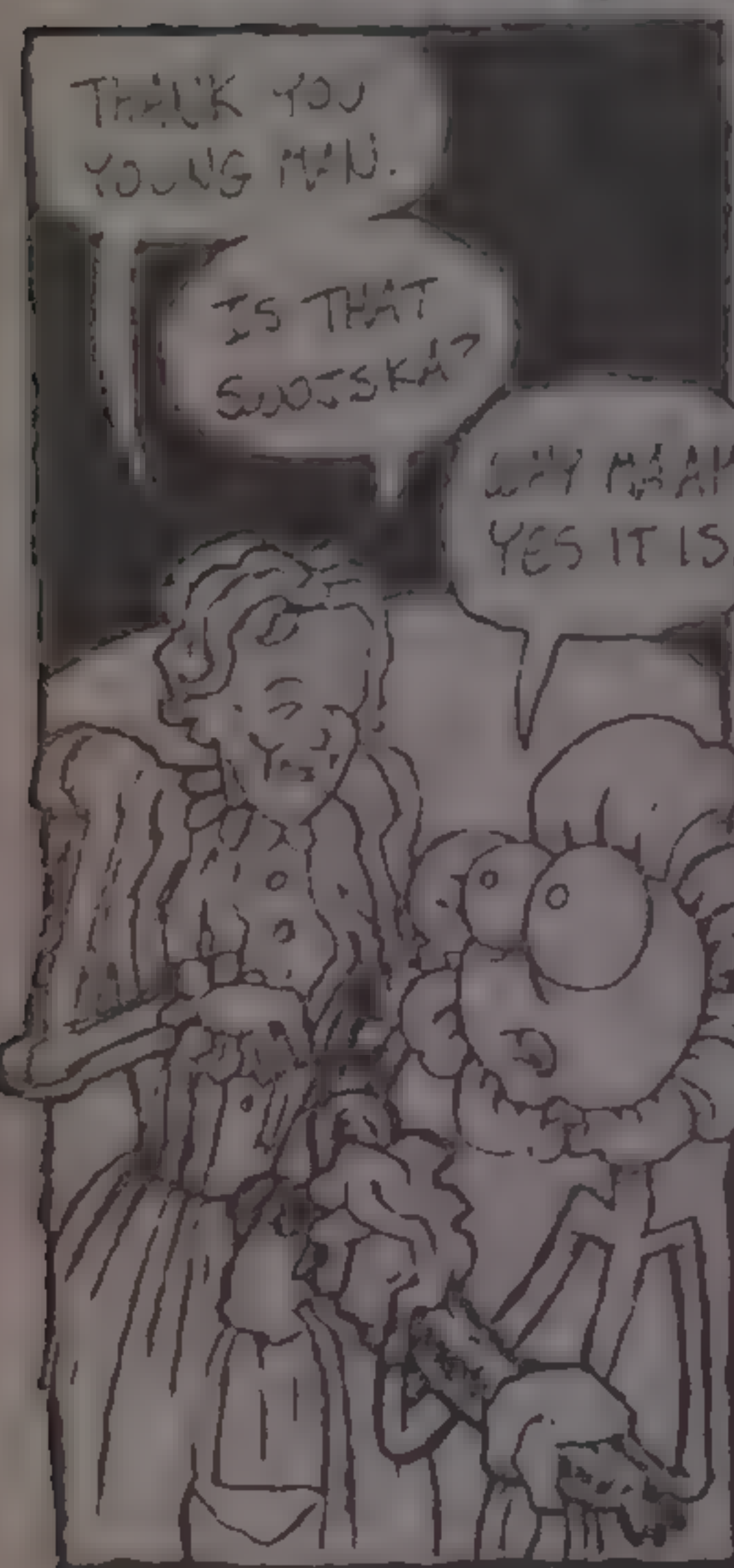
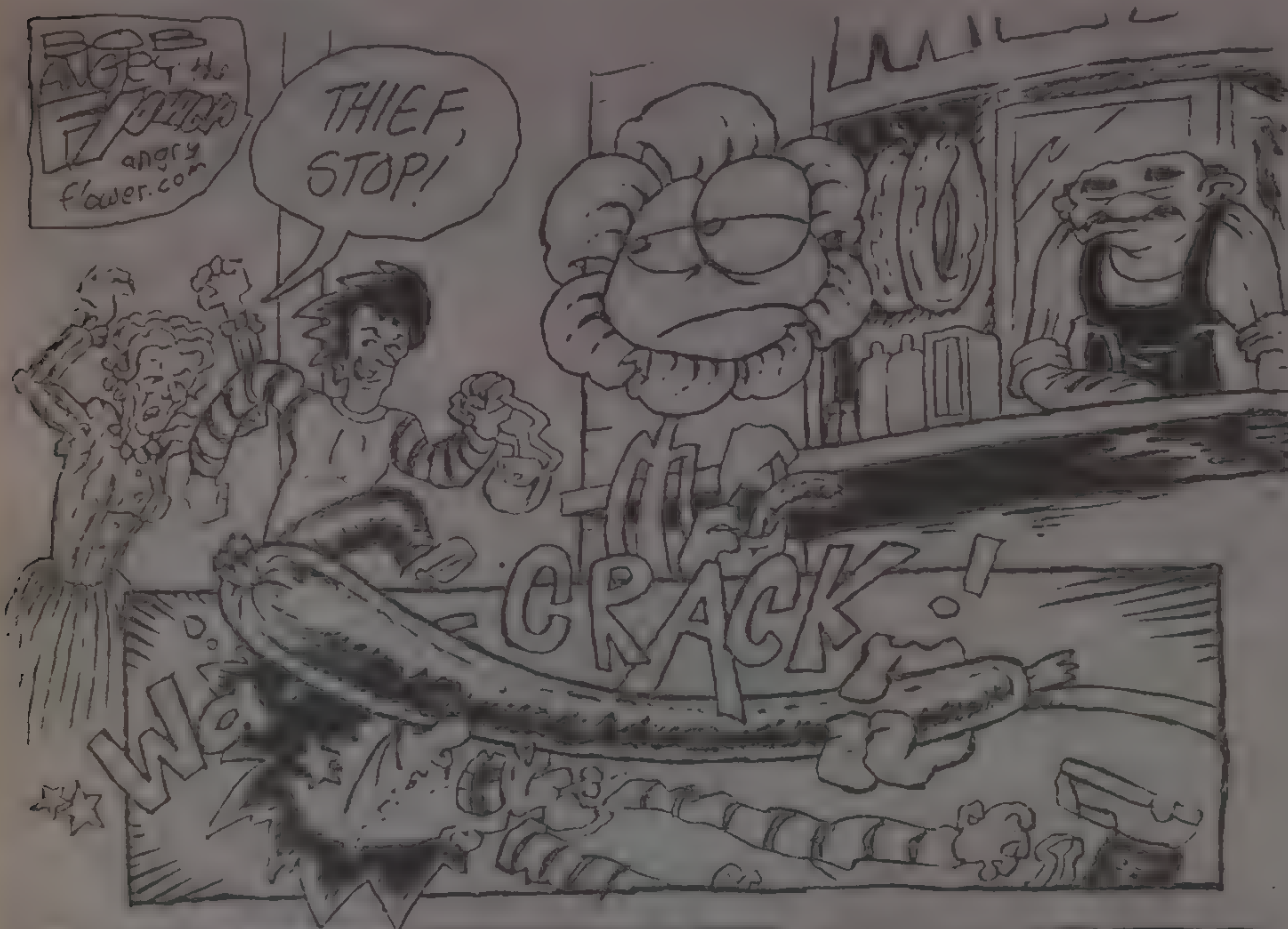
Twice inhabited, actually. This is maybe the most astounding aspect of *Fallout 3*'s accomplishment: in order to fully realize a ruined world, the un-ruined world had to be completely imagined. The wasted Washington exists in the rubble and residue of a time of wonders, an alternate-history America of 2077 that looked and felt like how a *Popular Mechanics* cover artist from 1957 might have imagined 1998, a neo-deco-futurist Eisenhower Pleasantville America where streamlined turbojet sedans whisk dads to

their important government jobs, popular music is untouched by the taint of rock 'n' roll and those without a berth in the fallout shelters are cheerily advised to duck and cover. Picking through what's left, you mourn for what was ... and it's a mourning stoked with anger: "You blew it up! Damn you! Damn you all to hell!"

NOW, THIS KIND of depth and detail means nothing if it lays on top of an actual game that sucks (which *Fallout 3* doesn't). In fact, this kind of depth and detail means nothing if it lays on top of a game that's fantastic (which *Fallout 3* is). In an interactive medium, it's not enough for narrative and setting and theme to simply "lay on top" of the game; for the art to be successful, these things have to inform—and be informed by—the players' actions. *Fallout 3* manages this in several excellent ways; I'll give you the example of books. Those familiar with the developer's *Elder Scrolls* series of fantasy adventures know Bethesda loves to cram their worlds with literature, virtual shelves groaning with text that fleshes out the universe, from arcane gri-

moires to racy popular trash. Their Capital Wasteland is filled with printed matter, too, but the 200 years since the bomb haven't been kind to the delicate dead trees: most every book is ruined, waterlogged, burned, shredded, unreadable. But a very precious few are intact, and valuable; some impart old-world wisdom and skills, all can command high prices in trade. Players, then, are motivated by purely "game" reasons—gaining in abilities and resources—to behave in exactly the way a Wastelander would, combing through piles of soggy, charred pulp for any vestige of the past that might help them survive.

I'm just going to go ahead right now and call *Fallout 3* the Game of the Year, and maybe even Game of the Decade, even though Sony's *LittleBigPlanet* is probably more "important" to the medium. It's just so astounding, so constantly rewarding. If there's any way at all you can swing it—you've got to know somebody with a PS3, 360 or reasonably hot Windows machine, right?—you owe it to yourself to take a trip into this masterpiece of world-creation. **V**



Yes Oil can!

HOCKEY IN THE BOX

CFR road trip. Rexall Place is consumed with the rodeo antics so the team is away from its home digs until the last cow patty. The Oilers end a wretched five-game winless streak with a pair of Halloween weekend victories, defeating Carolina 3-1 and Philly 5-4 in a pair of back-to-back afternoon games. That's better. Keep it up.

UNITED STATES (repeated) 'em all. The Oilers can't win in back-to-back games. They can't win afternoon games. They can't win on *Hockey Night in Canada*. They lose jersey retirement games. They can't win on pay-per-view. There always seems to be some kind of negative correlation between the Oil and any game that isn't played at 7 pm on *Sportsnet*. So I took the time that I should be cramming for yet another midterm and painstakingly went over the Oilers' schedules for the post-lockout season and came up with some trends as well as some not-trends.

Since the lockout, the Oilers are a not-that-bad 36-38 in back-to-back games. Sort of impressive, considering that half those games are on only one day's rest (obviously). In afternoon games, they sport a fine record of six wins and four losses. For home games with jersey retirements, the Oilers are dead even (two wins, two losses and two ties). For *Hockey Night in Canada* and pay-per-view games I could only go as far back as the 2006-07 season. The mythical *HNIC* curse can be put to rest. Their national television record on Saturday nights is 15-14. The most interesting stat is their record on Oilers pay-per-view nights; a dismal 8-14. Ouch. Token blame will now be given to Gene Principe. Sorry, Gene. Someone's gotta take the PPV bullet. Think tough guys make a difference? In games where there were two or more

fights, the Oil are lagging behind at 13 wins and 20 losses. This season alone, the team has just one win and three losses in (made up a word here) "polypugilistic" games. One stat I couldn't track down is their record with third or retro jerseys. It seems to me that it isn't very good, but I think I now know better about making statements like that. **TB**

MAIN SOURCE RULES' LEGACY: MOWAN'S LEGACY The National Hockey League features 24 American teams in 18 American states (including the Capitals in the District of Columbia). Of those 18 American states with an NHL team, 13 of them, as of Tuesday night, were found to be so-called "blue states." The real hockey moms spoke up. **DY**

HEMSKY 2012 Last Sunday's matinee game against the Philadelphia Flyers wasn't a perfect win (Philly got four goals) but it did have a couple promising twists. Veteran goalie Dwayne Roloson got his second win of the season in Philly and his second consecutive start re-igniting the starting goalie debate. He also did that cool trick where he bats the puck down the ice. Winger Ales Hemsky came to life and scored two stunning goals against the Flyers. In both of these highlight reel markers Hemsky made a bee-line to the net, deked the goalie and put the puck in like a only a natural goal scorer can. More, please. **DY**

NOW WE CAN VOTE The NHL has released this year's nominees for the upcoming All Star Game. Three Oilers (Ales Hemsky, Shawn Horcoff and Sheldon Souray) are among the 104 NHL players on the ballot to make the starting lineup of the annual hockey schmooze-fest in Montréal this February. Fans can vote online from November 12 to January 2 and view results (on nhl.com) in real-time. Vote early. Vote often. **DY**

THIS WEEK'S OILER DEFINITION "Blue State": 1) A state that votes Democrat in a Presidential election; a term popularized by the late Tim Russert in the 2000 election. 2) The state Oiler fans are put into between wins or when playoffs are missed. **V**

Put a pie in your face

Attitude can't kill a delicious night at Vi's

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vueweekly.com

Some things are just not meant to be. Take my recent, unrelenting and somewhat urgent craving for Chinese food. Real, authentic, soul-warming Chinese food. I grabbed my husband and went in search of a little restaurant I had heard was one of the best. It was destined to be an oh-so-good-night. But old, rancid grease and the most incredible amount of dirty dishes I have ever seen, piled haphazardly everywhere, quickly stymied that plan. It suddenly felt more like a simple comfort food night.

We drove until brilliant blue lights, strung ornately just outside **Vi's for Pies**, shone through the impending darkness and captured our attention. Set on the corner of a small, upscale strip mall in equally upscale Glenora, we were pleasantly relieved to find plenty of parking at 8 pm on a Friday night.

Once we pulled open the stylish glass door, we found ourselves face-to-face with a prominent glass display case proudly showcasing tantalizing variations of the ultimate in decadence. We took a few more steps and stopped to inspect the big black chalkboard that had the menu written on it in a rainbow of colours. But before my eyes were able to digest much of anything, a waitress directed us, kind

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VI'S FOR PIES

of abruptly, to sit down and informed us that she would follow with the menu. So sit we did.

The layout of the restaurant almost makes it seem like it's divided into two rooms: the original, somewhat more rustic smaller room and, just off to the side, the newer, more contemporary one. We found a table for two in the larger and newer room, with the high ceiling, burnt orangey-brown walls and big windows. The overall effect was simple, warm and comfortable.

The big chalkboard menu followed us to our table and was plunked down, a bit too close for comfort. Or maybe it was that most of the letters on the top half of the board had been smudged. Everything—three daily specials, a couple of soups and salads, a few appetizers and some bunnies and entrees—was discernable, if slightly dizzying. The focus was on hearty comfort food: veggie lasagna, spinach/three-cheese quiche and chicken pot pie.

WHILE DEBATING how comforting we wanted our comfort food, our wait-

ress appeared and plopped two clear plastic glasses of water onto the table. They got high marks for the juicy slices of lemon floating in them but not-so-high for the plastic. Then she asked if we were ready to order

We weren't.

What we really wanted was a glass of wine. She disappeared to find a wine list and when she reappeared we both ordered a glass of the Vina Tarpaca Natura Cabernet Sauvignon

from Chile (\$6.95 each). With only three choices of each type of wine, it wasn't much of a decision.

Before she had a chance to scoo-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18



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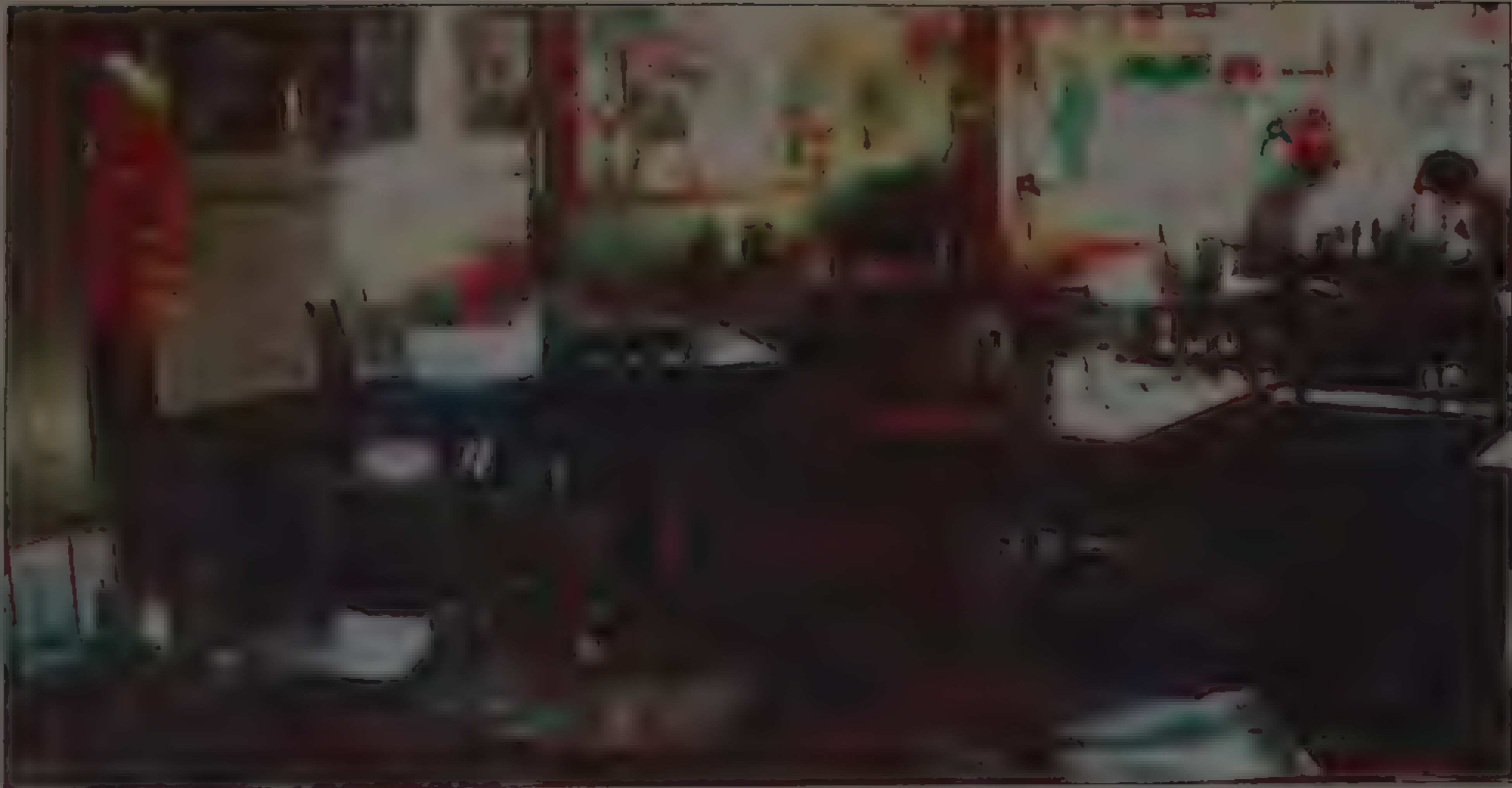


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Beg, borrow and feel

Highlevel Diner goes from frugal roots to one of Edmonton's faves

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vueweekly.com

When you walk into the Highlevel Diner, through the narrow hallway that is home to some of the longest weekend brunch line-ups in this city, you arrive at the little specials board and the entrance to the dining room. Just to the left, residing grandly above table 17, is a portrait of Pat Turner. Thank Mr Turner. Because of him, you will still be able to line up for their amazing cinnamon buns for (hopefully) years to come.

Turner owned the building the Highlevel Diner calls home up until late last year. A developer, scouting out the neighbourhood, became interested in the building. Lots of money interested. In a remarkable show of generosity, Turner approached the owners of the diner and offered to sell it to them first. Not for the hefty

PROFILE **HIGHLEVEL DINER**
1997 - 2006, 2008

amount he could have gotten and that the owners couldn't afford, but for the appraised value of the building.

The diner will be 26 years old on December 2. And, according to Kim Franklin, one of the owners, it was launched by a group of "dumb, young, crazy" individuals with "a great idea, a great location" but no money. They didn't let the lack of money stop them, though. They solicited a number of silent partners and did what they had to.

Part of that meant buying all their equipment used. They even bought the carpet off the floor of the dining room in the Hotel MacDonald, which

at the time had just closed and was selling off some of its stuff. Franklin laughed as she remembered lining up outside. They ended up buying the dining room carpet—they actually had to go in and roll it up, cart it back to the diner and unroll it there.

So they built the diner with their own hands and with scraps they hunted down. The carpet has since been replaced, but they still use one of the original second-hand bar sinks that was installed almost 26 years ago. Even the furniture was second-hand: one of the original owners' dads was in the antique furniture business and helped them track down what they needed. The chairs are long gone, but the tables are still the same and as sturdy as ever.

Franklin says they wanted to open

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY HARRIS

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Cheap and easy

Tasty secrets for packing your own damn lunch

CHRISTOPHER THRALL / christopher@vancouverweekly.com

There are people out there who like to cook. These kitchen-dwellers lurk around Le Gnome on their quest for the perfect zester. They know how to use arugula. They watch Rachael Ray with the sound on. They spend their time discovering recipes, shopping for ingredients, composing epic meals and cleaning up rather than going out for beer and wings. Those people bring fantastic lunches to work.

The rest of us hopelessly rummage through the fridge on our way out the door: those take-out boxes have been there for weeks, the vegetable crisper has never been opened, and society frowns on squirting a variety of condiments into a baggie for the third time this week. On the other hand, eating out every day leads to a muffin top and puts a serious dent in the cash flow.

Luckily, there are several ways to eat decently, on a budget, without exerting a lot of effort. It just takes a little forethought. If you put a tenth of the planning into your lunches that it took to get your crew together for movie night, you would be laughing all the way to the lunchroom.

First of all, your highest priority is to invest in a selection of containers. I know it's trendy to seek bamboo wrappings made from third-world, sustainable farming methods, but five bucks will pick up a decent set of washable Glad or Ziploc containers with lids that seal. Unless you reuse them, sandwich baggies aren't acceptable substitutes. Plastic containers are perfect for transporting dishes that wouldn't fare well in a satchel. Just don't microwave anything in them.



EAT WELL BRING A LUNCH

LEFTOVERS

The easiest way to guarantee a lunch the next day is to have some food left over the night before. This can mean making a larger meal, but if you're not very culinary, that might prove difficult. When you're out at a restaurant, try ordering a couple of big appetizers and request a doggie bag for the lion's share of your entrée. You can raid the parental fridge, of course, but only slightly more ethical is smuggling some of those new containers on a trip to a buffet.

Transfer food out of those restaurant clamshell containers right away. Burp out the air and store your containers in the fridge. Don't open them until lunchtime in the next few days—most previously-served food shouldn't

hang around for too long

As for bringing them to work, most refrigerated food should be accompanied by a cooling agent, for food safety's sake. Keep a few bottles of water in the freezer and transport them in your (insulated) lunch bag together. Smaller meal servings could merit baggies of frozen seedless grapes or segmented oranges as both coolers and side snacks.

SHOPPING

Besides the fresh fruit and veggies—which you should pick up every week in small quantities—there are a number of different shopping techniques available for the cheap and easy crowd. Don't be too tempted by the pre-packaged options available, since the closer you get to the way the food came naturally, the better (and less expensive, generally). Of course, it's easy to get fanatical about organic this and free-range that, which is a whole other article.

Sliced deli meats are a good strate-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



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HIGHLEVEL DINER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

a place with "healthy food, an eclectic menu, international fare, a cozy atmosphere and good value—a place where people would feel comfortable." And because they were close to the university, they wanted to attract a savvy crowd.

That savvy crowd didn't originally include families. When they first opened, they didn't even have high chairs. But then their regular customers started having kids. Kim still remembers buying their first high chair for Nathan Taylor. His dad and his symphony cohorts used to hang out at the diner and, once Nathan appeared on the scene, he started hanging out at the diner too—in his specially purchased high chair.

TODAY THE DINER is very much about families. The owners strive to make everyone feel comfortable and it appears to be working. Franklin pointed out a man, sitting alone by the window, reading his paper, eating breakfast and sipping a mug of steaming hot coffee. He bikes there for breakfast five days a week.

They have a lot of regular customers. And they make an effort to cater to individual needs. "There are vegetarian options, celiac-friendly options and, if anyone is in doubt of whether they can eat something or not, the diner keeps an ingredient list on hand for every item on the menu."

The staff at the Highlevel Diner

tends to stay for a long time "because we like them and are nice to them," according to Franklin. They value their staff and treat them well, just like they treat their customers well. She said it's a hard business, but part of the key is how you view it. If you think of your customers as a problem, your staff and their attitude will reflect that.

Not much has changed over the years. They've always focused on healthy food, so they haven't had to change with recent trends. Some items, like the burger, the spinach pie and those amazing cinnamon buns, have always been on the menu. They've tweaked it a little, but that's it. "There's no point in changing something that works really well."

The same goes for the dining room—the warm, cozy colours help make it "feel like a big, comfy chair" and her customers are always telling her, "Don't change anything."

All of the shareholders—Franklin, Debbie Parker, Chinh Hong Vu and Chuong ("Johnny") Van Tran—work at the restaurant. Franklin and Vu work in the front, while Parker and Tran are the "very talented chefs." Kim feels that it makes a very real impact on the feel of the restaurant. They care—after all, it's their life.

Kim had a hard time sitting still while we talked—her eyes kept darting around the room and she occasionally popped up to help out. "I should be working," she told me. So I let her get back to work—adding a touch more friendliness to an already friendly diner. ▼

PIES FOR PIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

off, I asked her what was in the Cheddar and Veggie Bunwich. She gave me a look—not the good kind "Cheese and veggies," came the helpful reply. A bit more prodding led to the revelation that "veggies" actually constituted tomatoes, sprouts and cucumbers.

That dashed my hopes of something a bit more exotic, so I ordered the Spinach, Almond and Mandarin Salad (\$7.95) and a 9-grain bun (\$.85). My husband was leaning toward the Spicy Pork Étouffée special but in the end couldn't resist the Shepherd's Pie (\$10.95), something I never make at home.

Our food certainly didn't come in record time, but we did have our wine (that came in bizarrely small glasses, filled right to the top) to sip. And we watched people drift in and lay claim to all the remaining vacant tables. And then we watched people wait at the front for tables to vacate. Evidently the dessert rush was on.

JUST AS scrumptious-looking creations and steaming mugs of coffee were landing on most of the other tables in the room, our diners arrived. My spinach salad came on a large round white plate; mounds of bright green spinach were topped with a generous pile of golden brown almonds and, unfortunately,

canned mandarin oranges. I just don't get the canned fruit thing—there's always something fresh that would go so much better on a salad, even in Edmonton. Everything was wrapped in a mild, creamy, poppy seed dressing. Except for the canned mandarins, the salad was stellarly fresh and the 9-grain bun nestled next to it was soft but suitably substantial.

My husband was equally pleased with his Shepherd's Pie. He too had a big white plate, only his was square. Half was filled with a hearty slice of the Shepherd's Pie and half was covered with fresh mixed greens and slices of tomato and cucumber. A little pot of hearty balsamic dressing came on the side. Shepherd's Pie isn't my thing, but my husband declared it to be meaty and flavourful and was pleased with the absence of any errant little grease pools. A golden mound of creamy mashed potatoes topped it off. It never stood a chance.

He had no room left for the Bumbleberry Streusel Cheesecake that had intrigued him earlier. I, on the other hand, simply had to have the German Chocolate Cake (\$6.05). Chewy coconut and crunchy pecans were surrounded by rich, dense, fudge-y layers of moist chocolate cake. Definitely worth the utterly extravagant and superfluous calories.

It ended up being an oh-so-good night after all—with a bit of attitude thrown in for good measure. ▼

FOOD NEWS! DISH WEEKLY

WANNA DISH?

Have a taste for food writing? Dying to delve into the delicious secrets of Edmonton? Dish is looking for contributors. The ideal candidates will have a passion for and a knowledge of a diverse array of cuisines, and also be eager to explore a variety of food-related issues, from talking to local producers and chefs to examining the global reach of the dinner plate. If this sounds like you, you should contact Dish Editor David Berry at dish@vueweekly.com. Please include "Writing for Dish" in the subject line.

THE BROCCOLI ANNIVERSARY

Renowned vegetarian restaurant Padmanadi will celebrate six years of serving the finest in faux-meat to our fair city with an all-day buffet this Friday, November 7. Stop in for all-you-can eat veggie curry mutton, and congratulate Kasim and the family on six wonderful years of giving the meatless among us a chance to enjoy fine Asian food.

Dish Weekly spills the beans on culinary events in Edmonton. Have an event our city's gourmands should know about? Just e-mail dish@vueweekly.com



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Thelonious Monk changed the world of jazz. To some he is next to a saint for his unorthodox style, knack for improvisation and undisputedly groundbreaking discography.

I'm not a huge jazz fan, but even I know the name Thelonious Monk and recall, vaguely, his importance to music. I won't pretend to know more than I do, but I do know he's considered the father of bebop.

So let me say this: if you love jazz, pay attention to this column, if you love beer, pay attention to this column, if you love both, cut this column out and paste it on your fridge.

Brewers are not noted for using famous people to pump up their product (unlike the unseemly wine types, with their Wayne Gretzky, Mike Weir and Dan Aykroyd brands). Brewers want their product to stand on its own. So when a well-renowned craft brewer launches a beer, in honour of a revered jazz musician, we all need to pay attention.

North Coast Brewing is a 20-year-old micro out of California, noted for high quality, uncompromising beers. Newly

arrived in Edmonton is Brother Thelonious, an unabashed reverie to Monk, who passed away in 1992.

THE BEER IS a Strong Belgian Dark Ale, which is commonly brewed by monks (get it?). It's a style well deserving of Monk's name—dark, rich and complex. It's also highly alcoholic, at 9.4 per cent (I have no idea of Mr Monk's relationship to alcohol [Editor's Note: We believe he liked it straight, no chaser]).

It is a deep, ruby brown beer with a thin, off-white head that dissipates quickly. It has a rich look to it. The aromas are of sweet candy, plum, raisin and some faint spices of pepper and nutmeg.

The taste begins with a thick, rich maltiness, transitioning to fruitiness and rich toffee notes, and I also detected some caramel and brown sugar. The sweetness is countered not by hops, but by a yeasty spiciness of pepper and pie spices. Playful touches of plum and raisin just add to the satisfying complexity of this beer.

For a Belgian Strong Ale, it is a bit subdued, but that's no criticism. It offers a true version of the style attuned to north American tastes, not unlike Thelonious himself.

This beer, like jazz, is not a saccharine quick-hit of Britney Spears or Miley Cyrus. Just like jazz, it's built for savouring, lingering and reaching deep into its meaning. Take your time with this beer. Respect its complexity and honour its namesake. ▽

BRING A LUNCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

if you transfer them into sealable containers right away. Dividing out beef, chicken thighs or breasts into freezerable packages of two will guarantee that you either have a leftover or a dinner for two close at hand. Bulk boxes of pasta are always welcome if you can control the desire to gradually devour the meal all night and reserve yourself a serving in the fridge for the following day. Packaged sauces or cans of soup are easy ways to vary the prosaic noodle.

However, whenever you step into the world of the processed add-ins, take a quick minute to scan the label. Two areas—serving size and Percentage of Daily Value—will tell you most of what you need to know. By simply comparing 40 per cent of your daily sodium or fat intake for 125 mL of one product to 20 per cent for 500 mL of another will steer you in the right direction. Aim for about 2000 calories a day and otherwise, go nuts.

DIY

The best way to guarantee yourself a series of quick, easy, inexpensive and healthy lunches is to just make the damn things yourself. Fortunately, even those with minimal kitchen skills can put together some basics within an hour that can last the whole week. Make yourself a pot of chili, soup or a casserole on Sunday evening and portion it out into five containers for the


week. Vary it up with different buns, crackers, fruit and veggies so you don't get bored and make something else the next week.

Nothing's sexier than a guy—or girl—who knows their way around a kitchen, and it really doesn't take as long as it seems.

The other option is the humble sandwich, which is passed or failed on the quality of its condiments. Again, vary the platform by choosing pita, Kaiser rolls, tortilla wraps or whole grain bread on any given shopping trip. Every once in a while, pick up something interesting to add to the matrix: whole-grain mustard, an intriguing chutney or fiery Sriracha sauce will add flair to any sandwich combination.

While breakfast claims to be the most important meal of the day, the work day features lunch, the party, Friday. If you have ever done one of those lame expense-tracking steps as a precursor to monthly budgeting, you were probably pretty stunned at how much you spend on quick lunches and snacks through the weekday grind. Those costs can drop and you can both eat healthier and feel better if you just introduce quick, cheap and easy lunches from home.

Don't deprive yourself of the occasional meal out, of course, but if you're "grabbing something to eat" more often than you aren't, think about your wallet and the muffin top. Pick up some containers and see what happens. ▽



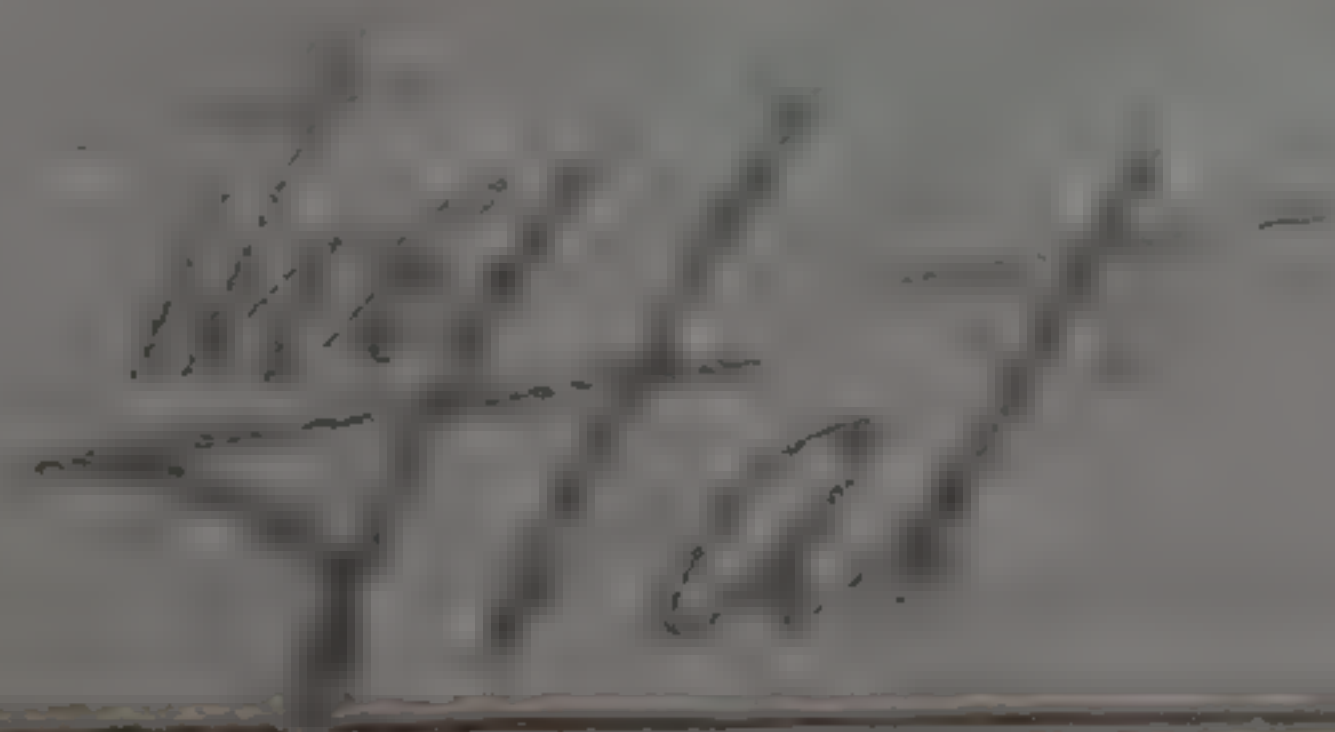
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Colorado's Naropa Institute known for unique approach of 'contemplative education' ... and Jack Kerouac poetics

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vnuweekly.com

For more than three decades, students looking for a liberal arts education enriched through Buddhist spiritual practices have flocked to Boulder, Colorado's **Naropa University**. Founded in 1974 by exiled Tibetan monk Chögyam Trungpa as the Naropa Institute, Naropa University offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in liberal arts fields and has a particular focus on creative writing through its Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, which was co-founded by Allen Ginsberg, Anne Waldman, John Cage and Diane di Prima.

Naropa teaches what it refers to as "contemplative education," a practice intertwined into all of their courses. Contemplative education is the melding of eastern spiritual practices with western academic discipline for a more complete education. As Acting Director of Marketing and Communications Patrick Johnson explains, contemplative education provides students with tools that other universities don't.

"It improves [education] because we're not saying 'here are a list of dates you need to memorize' or 'here is a formula you need to memorize.' It's more than that. The reflective part is being able to have a deep understanding of yourself and that helps you better relate to the material you're trying to learn," he says. "It's the ability to look inside yourself and say, 'Here is what I'm capable of, this is what I can do,' and using that, as well as the traditional academic ideas."

The contemplative nature of education at Naropa University takes a number of forms, some of which are formal, such as specialized courses in meditation, and others which are integrated into the curriculum at the classroom level as a reminder to students that the spiritual skills they learn at the school can be integrated into their daily lives.

As Vice President for Academic Affairs Stuart Sigman explains, the goal is for students to personally integrate the material that they are studying so that they can make sense of it on a deeper level than simply an intellectual one.

"The goal is to use various contemplative practices, such as meditation, to help the students slow down the chatter of their mind's thinking so that they can concentrate on their studies,

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so they can reflect on the meaning it has for them, and what it brings up for them, what obstacles and other feelings it may provoke as part of their trying to make sense of the material," he says, listing tai chi, yoga and ikebana as other formal contemplative practices the school offers students.

"To be in the present moment, to reflect on what is actually happening around them and with them—that's the goal."

In addition to these formal practices, there are a number of contemplative activities which happen in class that are designed to bring the students' focus to a sharp point and prepare them for the material they are about to learn.

"We begin all classes with a bow in and [end with] a bow out and it's an attempt to bring the student psychologically, emotionally, mentally and physically right there. The chatter they had from the conversation just before they entered the classroom ceases, they're really present for the faculty and for their peers. The bow in is part of the rituals of contemplative practice," says Sigman. "Some faculty will have a procedure where at various points in the class someone will be appointed to ring a bell and that's an opportunity to stop the conversation no matter where it is and for everyone to take a kind of momentary internal inventory—'How am I feeling, what are the emotions this is bringing up in me, how do I wanna deal with that, am I fully present to this conversation, this lecture, this discussion?' So there are formal recognized contemplative practices and there are other informal pedagogical tools that teachers can use in their classes to help students stay in the moment."

BUT A FOCUS on contemplative education is not the only thing that sets Naropa University apart from other post-secondary schools—the student-to-faculty ratio is an incredibly low 10 to one.

"The smaller student-to-faculty ratio you have the more personalized education you have," says Johnson. "I realize it seems obvious, but having

gone to a very large university myself I can certainly tell you from my own personal experience that if you have a class that only has 10, 11 or 12 students in it you're going to have a much more personalized education. Our faculty know our students by name—it's not a situation of, 'Oh there's 40 students in my class and maybe I know who five of them are.' So there's a real personal connection between our students and our faculty and that's very important because you get a much more direct relationship with faculty members."

And while such a small ratio might lead one to believe that Naropa is a very elite institution—and therefore a difficult school to get into—Johnson assured me that it's not necessarily harder to get into Naropa, though it is a different process from other schools.

"One of the major things of our admissions process is the interview process—we base a lot on that. We don't really use a whole lot of test scores—you have to go through an interview process and there's a whole lot of writing involved. The people in admissions can get a real sense of the individual perspective student instead of, 'Here's a list of test scores,' which

isn't particularly personal," he explains. "You really do need to have to put onto paper what you're thinking and you need to be able to communicate that to one of the admissions staff during the interview process."

THE STRUCTURE of Naropa and the admissions process based on interviews and writing skills has led to a situation where the institution has more graduate students than undergrads, a situation very different from most other post-secondary institutions. According to Johnson, this has led to a more mature student body ready to tackle the extra challenges a school like Naropa University throws at them

"We have over 600 graduate students and about 450 undergraduate students, so with that you've got a bit of an older age for the average student on campus. And we get a lot of transfer students in the undergraduate programs so we do have a number of people who've already had a year or two of college and have a little bit of life experience, instead of being 17 or 18 coming into university for the first time," he says. "You do have to be a mature student when you come into the programs so that you can be

reflective and you can really understand that concept."

Because of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics and its being co-founded by Allen Ginsberg, Naropa University has long had a connection to the Beat Poets and their work. The Kerouac School is staffed by well-known writers and poets while their summer program sees a further influx of luminaries onto the school's campus every year

"This is something that's been around pretty much since the founding of the institution in 1974. In 1974 when it was the Naropa Institute and it was set up that way, the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics was an original part of the institution so it's deeply ingrained with the institution because of how it was founded," says Johnson. "Especially through the summer writing program, we have a tremendous number of people who are well known in writing or poetics or both and we've had that for many, many years

"It's quite a collection of people and they're very well known, very well respected and we're very happy and proud to have these people come on campus." ▽



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That belongs in a museum

Alberta-Smithsonian Internship Program offers students the chance to experience history

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com

Climb the stairs to the third floor of the Old Arts Building on the University of Alberta campus and wander down the hallway and you'll find a series of old album covers lining the wall. The covers are all from releases on the late Moses Asch's Folkways Records, the label that Asch founded in 1948 with the goal of documenting the entire world of sound. The result of that effort was the release of over 2000 albums, capturing everything from music to spoken word to the sounds of nature.

Asch knew Edmonton because his son, an anthropology professor at the U of A, and in 1985 Asch donated a complete collection of the Folkways recordings to the university. A year after Asch's 1986 death Folkways Records was acquired by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC ensuring that all of the label's recordings remain in print, and making the institution the only other place with the complete catalogue of Folkways

LEARN SMITHSONIAN INTERNSHIPS

Records in its possession.

The U of A and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings partnered in 2003 and the folkwaysAlive! centre opened its doors in the Old Arts Building in May 2005, engaging in research, holding performances, offering the opportunity to browse and listen to the collection, as well as featuring a small room and recording setup where the centre continues Asch's work, capturing all manner of sounds for historical cataloguing.

The partnership with the Smithsonian has now gone beyond folkwaysAlive!, though, with the **Alberta-Smithsonian Internship Program** broadening the scope and offering the chance for post-secondary students to work at the Smithsonian in Washington or at one of its

centres located around the world.

Lorna Arndt, the project manager for folkwaysAlive!, explains that the internship program was birthed out of a number of serendipitous events, beginning around 2004 when the Smithsonian was beginning planning

for the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival with an eye towards Canada as a possible feature country in 2006.

"We were into an election and the federal government couldn't make a commitment and didn't know who was going to be in charge," Arndt recalls.

"And at the same time the U of A president at the time, Rod Fraser, was going through the Alberta office in Washington and had heard about the possibility of doing something at the festival and said, 'Well, the U of A already has a partnership with the Smithsonian through folkwaysAlive!.' Around the same kind of time Ralph Klein was down in Washington doing work in the Alberta office and said, 'Well, why can't it be Alberta? Why does it have to be Canada?' and he had the financial resources to make that happen."

When the two-week festival began in 2006, Alberta sent around 160 artists, performers and craftspeople to Washington to perform and talk about what they do in the province. While the participants talked Alberta up, behind the scenes there was a real willingness between everyone—the artists, the politicians and the Smithsonian—to consider what the legacy of the festival would be, rather than simply allowing it to play out over two weeks and then be forgotten, so a number of programs were created, the internship among them.

DARRY TONGE, director of education abroad programs at the U of A, says that the choice of Alberta for the festival was unique in itself—"As far as I know, the event has predominantly been a country or a US state, so we sort of broke the mould where Alberta was featured as a province"—but so is

CONTINUES ON PAGE 25



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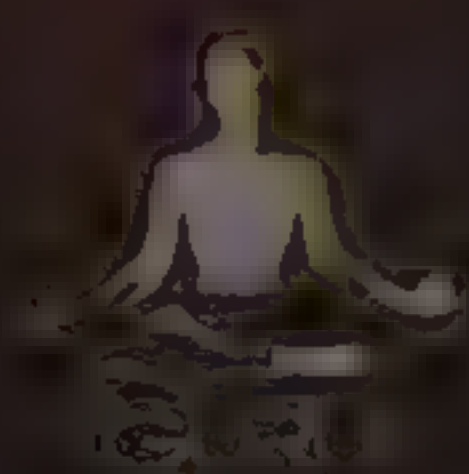
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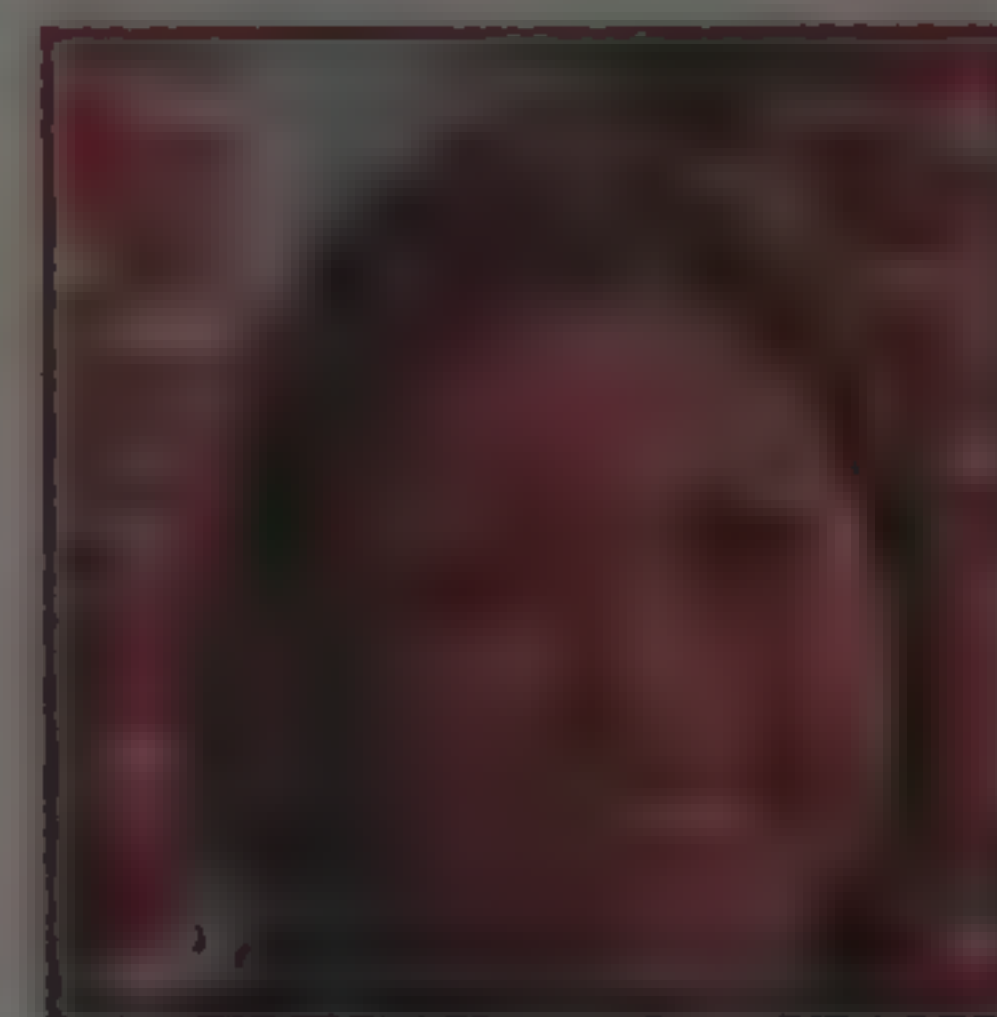
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NAIT's Culinary Boot Camp a week of long hours, but you do get to enjoy the fruits of your labour

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vancouverweekly.com

The mere mention of the words "boot camp" conjures up images of pain and strict discipline—not the sort of things most people choose to willingly subject themselves to. But NAIT's Culinary Boot Camp appears to be an exception to the rule: not only do people voluntarily sign up, they are actually excited about it. So excited that the week-long course, which comes with a \$2295 price tag, not only sells out every year, but extra weeks have had to be added.

Culinary Boot Camp is about to enter its fourth year and, because of the success of the original program, NAIT has expanded it by adding other boot camps—you can now subject yourself to Culinary Boot Camp Level II and Pastry Boot Camp as well.

So what possesses someone to register in a course that involves a week of 14-hour days—days that start at 6 a.m. and go until 8 o'clock at night?

For Ken Lewis, a senior product manager at Telus and father of three, it was simply something that piqued his interest.

"I really like cooking and I spotted this a couple of years ago, zooming around on the web," Lewis recalls. "And I just thought that it would be a ton of fun."

His wife, who might have had ulterior motives, ended up surprising him with the course as a birthday present, and he was thrilled.

According to Lewis, "It's not as brutal as it sounds." Yes, 14-hour days can be gruelling, but it's not non-stop cooking. A typical day starts with coffee and a discussion at 6 a.m. You talk about breakfast, you make breakfast, and then you eat breakfast. The same pattern is followed for lunch and dinner—you talk about what you are going to make and then you make it. And, of course, you eat it!

One day you might have a lecture on making hollandaise sauce from scratch (and that includes making your own mayonnaise), and the next morning you come in and make eggs benedict for breakfast. And if you're lucky enough to have a Pastry Boot Camp running next to you at the same time, they're busy whipping up a variety of breads and pastries. Everything gets laid out in a big buffet and voilà, breakfast.

Or you might have a seminar or course on how to break down a big strip of sirloin so you can cut it into steaks—and then you would actually cut the steaks and cook them for lunch or dinner.

No matter how you look at it, the days are still pretty long, just not brutal.

You even get to go on field trips. One visit took students to the Italian Centre on 97 Street, where they got to participate in an olive oil tasting. When I asked Lewis if there was any difference between the various olive oils he sampled, he replied that the difference

LEARN

CULINARY BOOT CAMP

was "huge." And when I asked if he would have noticed any difference before taking the Boot Camp, his answer was, "Well, I've never really sat down and poured half a dozen olive oils." He said he found them "really different, really tangy and good," and he has since expanded his home olive oil collection because of what he learned on the field trip.

There was also a bit of pasta talk and a discussion about some of the other products that the Italian Centre sells but, for Lewis, it was the olive oil tasting that stuck with him.

Their other field trip was to the new Sobeys on Jasper Avenue. So what did they learn there?

"Well, if I ever need to buy a constrictor, I know where to find it. Or ostrich," he says, explaining Sobeys' range of specialty products. "Whatever you come up with in these wacky recipes that you really can't find—like Japanese breadcrumbs—they have it there."

Aside from their unique meat selection, they also carry a wide range of high-end produce, and learning about that—including taste-testing—was the real focus of the field trip.

Boot camp students don't have to cook all the time; dinner out was also part of the experience. The class descended upon two of Edmonton's higher-end restaurants, where the chefs treated them to a kitchen tour. After that they sat down and enjoyed dinner. Part of the evening included a bit of a chat about the dinner and some of the things they had seen, but it was in class the following morning that they launched into a more in-depth discussion about what surprised them and what they would do differently. I won't reveal any trade secrets, but Ken found some of the revelations fascinating, and some a bit shocking.

Since you can't have food without wine (well, I can't anyways), one of the class guest speakers was a sommelier, who took students through a wine tasting and wine pairing.

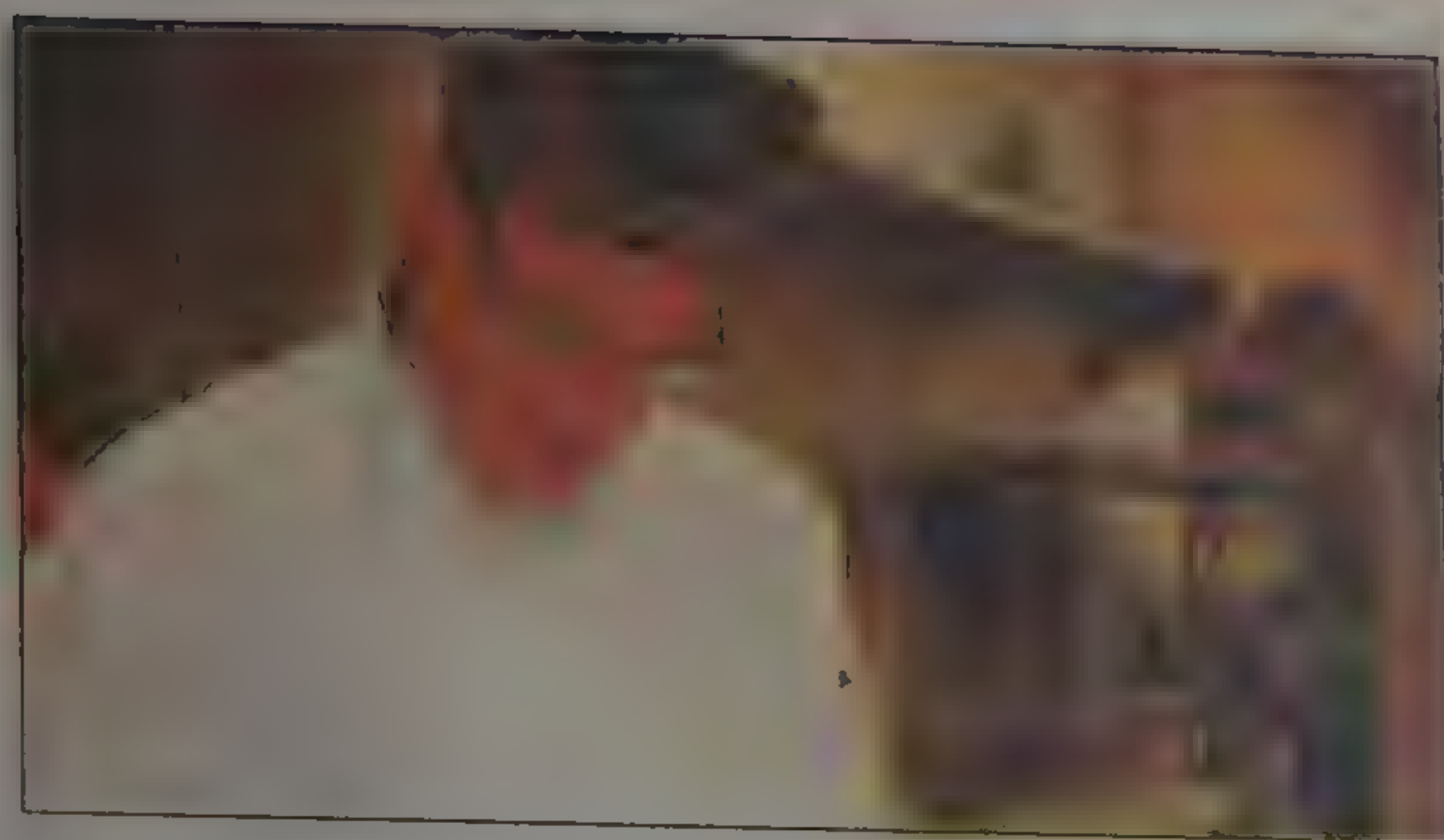
LEWIS'S SESSION had 24 students, divided into two groups of 12. Each group was lead by a NAIT chef/instructor and had one of NAIT's culinary students helping out and acting as the sous chef.

The participants in this particular group were a bit of a motley crew. One guy, who worked in a camp environment, had been sent by some of his buddies, who had all pitched in and paid for the course so that he could come back and cook for them. And then there were three doctors—all friends—who

did something together every year, and this particular year they decided to learn how to cook. Add a couple of retired couples, a few students doing a trial run to see if they really wanted to enter the culinary arts program, a foods teacher and someone who was treating it like a vacation. There certainly wasn't a "typical" student.

Lewis explains that the big difference between day one and day five was the cooking methodology. On the opening day, there was a lot of weighing going on, with every ingredient was meticulously weighed. By day five everyone had relaxed a bit and was realizing that recipes and techniques were just guidelines, and that in cooking there's a lot of leeway. Once the basics are nailed down, Lewis explains, the instructors tried to pull little bits of creativity out of students by asking questions like, "What are you going to do now to make it special?" They offered guidance, of course, but they really wanted you to think about what you could do.

Although there was no pressure—"just the pressure you put on yourself," according to Lewis—there is a final exam on the final day.



"You're expected to cook," Lewis says. "They outline the basics of what the meal is and then you have some creative license."

Students have a time frame to work with, and must present their (hopefully) culinary masterpieces to a panel of judges. Marks are given for presentation, creativity and how well everything is cooked. Even though students are being graded, no one else knows anyone else's results—and students leave with some hints and tips provided by the judges.

So what did Lewis take away from the course? Well, he says it gave him an appreciation of how much work goes into the actual preparation and cooking of food. It also made him realize how crucial timing is. But, most of all, it gave him "the courage to try whatever the hell I want to try." And, because of that, now he cooks more adventurously at home, although he admits "there have been some days that have been total train wrecks."

Hong Chew, Ken's instructor during Culinary Boot Camp, describes it as a crash course for foodies, one that gives them the "feel of working in an intense kitchen environment." It's a chance for people who are passionate about food to meet and mingle with other foodies. And by the end of the week it gives them a better understanding of the different cooking techniques, flavour profiles, wines and just food in general.

Unfortunately, the next NAIT Culinary Boot Camps aren't until the summer of 2009, with camps running the weeks of July 13 to 17, July 20 to 24 and July 27 to 31, but they are already taking names of anyone interested.

Even though the schedule is intense, Lewis emphasizes that it's mostly just a lot of fun, or, as he puts it, "They're not going to kick you out if you burn the potatoes." ▽

Not the boot camp type? Check out the introductory Kitchen Skills classes at NAIT's Culinary Arts Program on page 36.

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**Aveda Academy smooths transition
from school to hairdressing career**

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuwweekly.com

A bustling hive of activity on most days, Whyte Ave's Aveda Academy Salon has been giving hair students a chance to upgrade their skills and learn the systematic "Aveda" way to cut and colour hair for nearly six years. Catering to students who have completed hair school training or an apprenticeship program already, the **Aveda Academy** offers additional skills and a chance to get acquainted with Aveda's singular lines of products and colours, which are organically sourced and produced by wind power.

Paula Stenson, a cut educator at the Whyte Ave academy, explains that the school allows students to get more education in a safe and work-like environment, before they enter into the hairdressing field.

"It's a safe learning environment, it's very clean, it's a really good place for our students to go after hair school to get extra education," she says. "We do education two to three times per week, it's really hands on, super involved, lots of one-on-one, so we're preparing them for when they go into the field in a regular salon so they have a better understanding of everything."

To apply to the school, prospective students must complete a hairdressing school such as Marvel, or have gone through an apprenticeship program and worked in the industry. After that, they can drop off a resumé at the Aveda Academy. They then need to complete a skills assessment, which consists of a haircut and a few foils so that instructors and administrators can get a sense of where the student is at and recommend them to either the cut or colour stream at the academy. Every three months a new program starts, so new students are always coming and going from the academy.

"On the first day we have an orientation and the students discuss their inspirations, what got them into hair, and we do a basic run down of what the program is, things that they'll need, have lots of games and activities to make the first day fun and exciting. The next couple of days are pure theory, so for the first two weeks they're only learning. The third week in they can do one guest a day and then during the days they'll do model or mannequin work, and then another

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two weeks goes by and they're still learning. We ease them into guests slowly, build their confidence, get it really high and then kind of just let them go," explains Stenson.

"With every guest that comes in they'll have a consultation, do everything they need to do, and then they'll grab an educator and discuss what they found through their consultation, what the guests needs and wants are, and I'll talk with them and we'll form a course of action," she continues. "As time goes on they need us less and less. As they get more confident, they basically just show me the haircut at the very end."

THE SIZE of the classes that come through the academy are kept very small on purpose, so as to deliver the best quality of education to each student and to not inundate the instructor.

"It's very small, usually four to six students with one instructor," says Stenson. "You don't want to overwhelm. As an educator I want to give my energy equally to all of my students and if I have too many I don't feel it's fair to them, and it's not fair to me either. So we like to keep it small and intimate, so that we can have more one-on-one."

One very interesting thing about the Aveda Academy is that the students don't pay to be there. Instead, they are treated like apprentices, paid a wage to work at the salon and are learning while they work on hair.

"Instead of paying to be here, it would be the same as going to a hair salon as an apprentice or a tech, so they're getting paid, they're employees here as well as being educated and doing more schooling," says Stenson. "It's kind of the best of both worlds—you get extra education and you get paid to be here to do what you love."

"I'm sharing my knowledge with these students, everything that I've learned," she concludes. "I really want them to absorb that, learn it and make it their own, and then go and share that with someone else and give back." ▽

the internship program.

"What really makes this unique is there are so many opportunities, generally, when we talk about internships and training experiences, that have tended typically to be sciences, engineering, business, and the [Alberta-Smithsonian Internship Program] allows an opportunity for students well beyond those fields—students that would want to be involved in curatorial studies and music, to return and enrich the culture, collections and management within the province," Tonge says. "To bring those people back from certainly the world's single largest collection in one place of museums and cultural heritage, I think it really demonstrates on the part of the province quite a wide vision about how we will engage our youth in terms of training and development."

Remarkably, Alberta negotiated a record guarantee of 10 placements per year at the institute, which Tonge says is impressive because of the considerable competition for placements at the Smithsonian. It also ensures that Albertan students have a shot at a first-rate cultural experience both professionally and personally.

"The opportunities there are really quite immense, because when you think about the collection, what the public sees in the glass cases, just to manage that, the curatorial aspect of that collection and changing it and researching and building new collections, is just the tip of the iceberg, probably representing maybe a hundredth of what's really going on behind that glass case," Tonge says of the potential for a wide variety of work opportunities at the Smithsonian. "And that's where most of our students are doing their stuff—they're doing research, they do educational programming, so it's not just a static display case."

"There's an educational component that might be out in the schools, it might be on the web and some various aspects, from curatorial studies to education," he continues. "The Smithsonian will take some of the things they do on the road and we've had students involved in that and we've had people involved in more of the administrative aspects of what's behind administering this museum—law students that might be involved in issues related to different aspects of a collection."

Jessica Keyes, who graduated from her Master's in Ethnomusicology this past spring, knew the folkwaysAlive! program at the U of A, and she was the first student to be placed at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, where she has just completed her second internship.

"I've been doing web development under the webmaster for Folkways and working on the website redesign for Folkways that went live in June," she says of the work she's done at the Smithsonian. "I've also been doing updates on the Folkways and Global Sound websites, and we're working on another upcoming redesign that I've contributed to that goes live hopefully early in 2009."

The experience that Keyes has enjoyed in Washington has been broad, allowing her the chance to both learn new skills in a variety of interconnected fields, and to see first

hand the wide range of cultures that come together at the Smithsonian.

"I've gotten experience not just with web development," she notes, "but also in an e-commerce setting; the fact that it's a non-profit record label makes it really unique; and I've been around not only ethnomusicologists but also other great professionals who are highly trained and really knowledgeable from whom I've had an opportunity to learn about the record industry, marketing issues, e-marketing, e-commerce—all sorts of really useful things that will help me be more rounded when I'm looking for work."

SO HOW DO YOU get involved in the Alberta-Smithsonian Internship Program? Well, the internships are open to students at a degree-granting institution who meet the requirements, and the next deadline is coming up on January 8, so you'll want to have a look at the application information on the folkwaysAlive! website at fwalive.ualberta.ca.

Tonge says that the process is quite involved, partly due to the desire to match the right students with the Smithsonian in order to ensure that both the students and the Smithsonian are able to make the most of the connection.

"Students submit a portfolio of what they'd like to do, their interests and background information," he explains. "There is a province-wide committee that then reviews those applications and may go back and work with some students who they may like what they proposed but might need a little bit of work. We then nominate a pool of 10 people, sometimes alternates, to our contact at the Smithsonian, who then looks to find a placement."


"What the students are doing primarily is crafting a bit of a dossier on where this makes sense for them in their career and what the Smithsonian could bring to their education and personal and professional development, so they're exploring possibilities of what they might be able to learn and be engaged in at the Smithsonian," he continues. "There are set placements at the Smithsonian, but the relationship we have is really a little bit more than that and they really try to look at a student and go, 'Well, we don't quite do that, but your proposal and the things that you're saying, your background, we'd love to explore that with you a little bit more,' so it's a bit of a dialogue. Once we get to the point where we've got a student who seems to line up with them, there's even a bit of tweaking so that they may not only fit a student into an existing project but they may actually move a project in a certain way to allow for this kind of unique individual that we've discovered." ▼



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What doesn't change is the consensus on physical activity: to be healthy and ward off obesity and a range of chronic diseases, we need to exercise. How much exercise we need is still up for debate, but the overall message is consistent: the more physical activity, the better.

But even though we know we're supposed to get some sort of physical activity, it's usually easier said than done. There are many reasons why we don't get enough exercise, but it often comes down to motivation, or a lack of it. Maintaining an exercise routine takes motivation and commit-

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The most basic form of training is to get AFLCA (Alberta Fitness Leadership Certification Association) certification—essentially 44 hours of



training through mostly weekend courses. Although some people call themselves personal trainers after achieving this certification, they

aren't. They are specifically trained to be group exercise leaders, and as such can lead a range of fitness classes, like spinning or step, that are

offered in group settings. There is also a resistance training option, but that only allows people to complete the course to work in a weight room and

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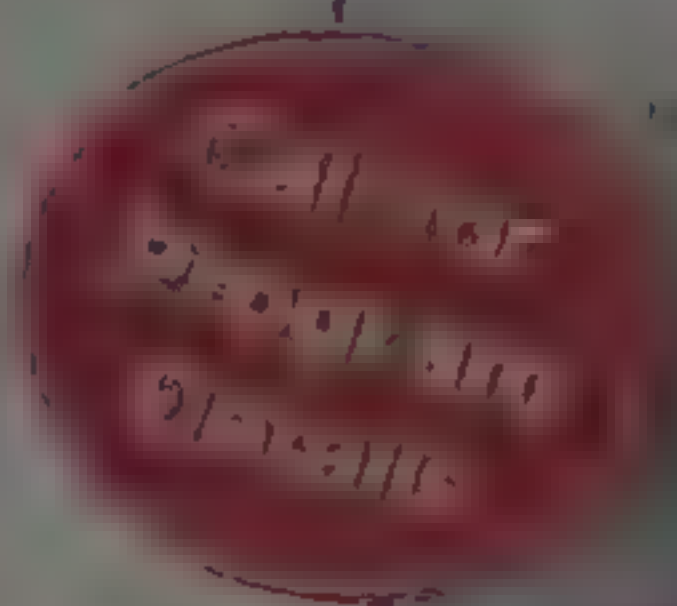
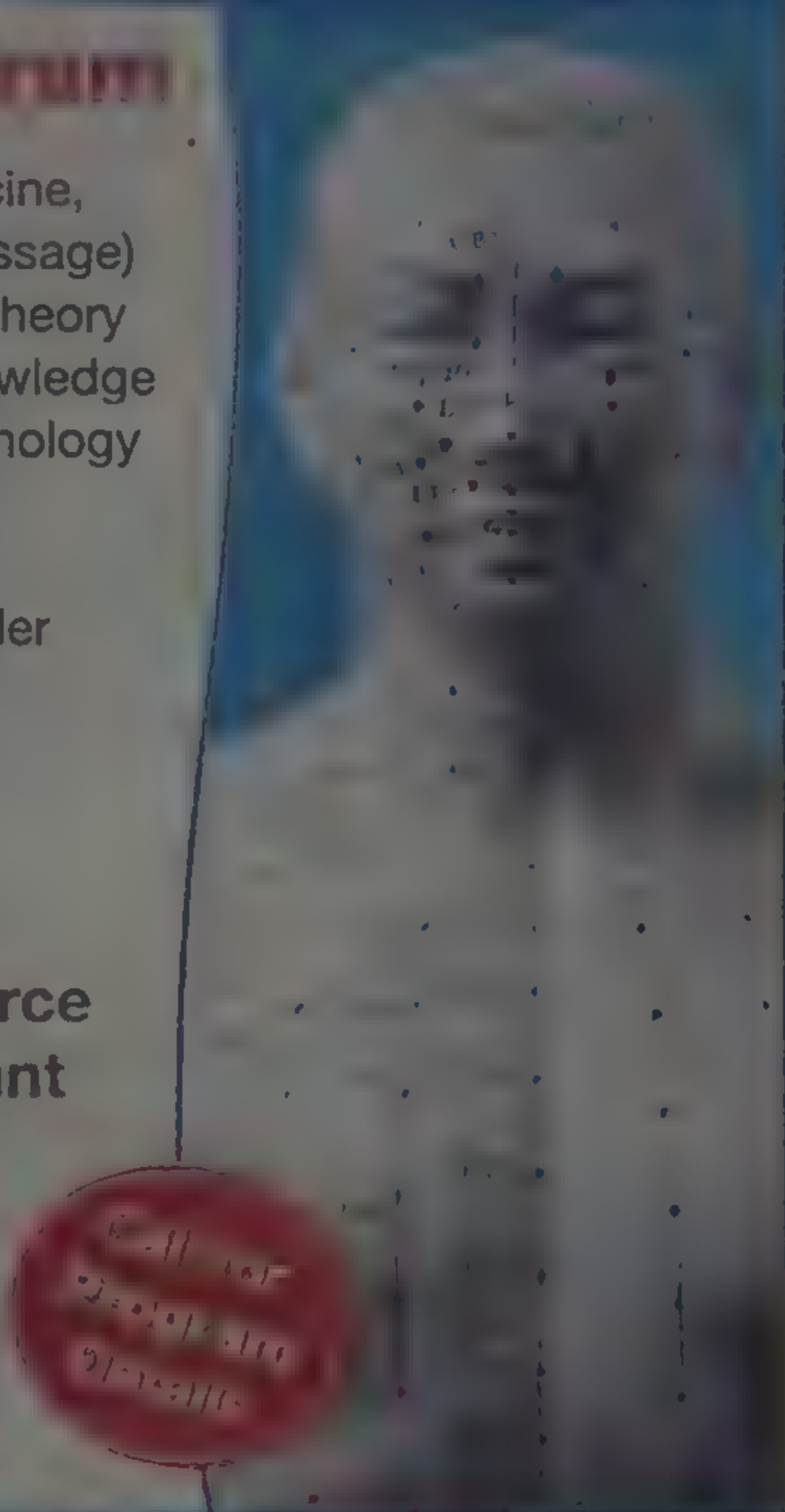
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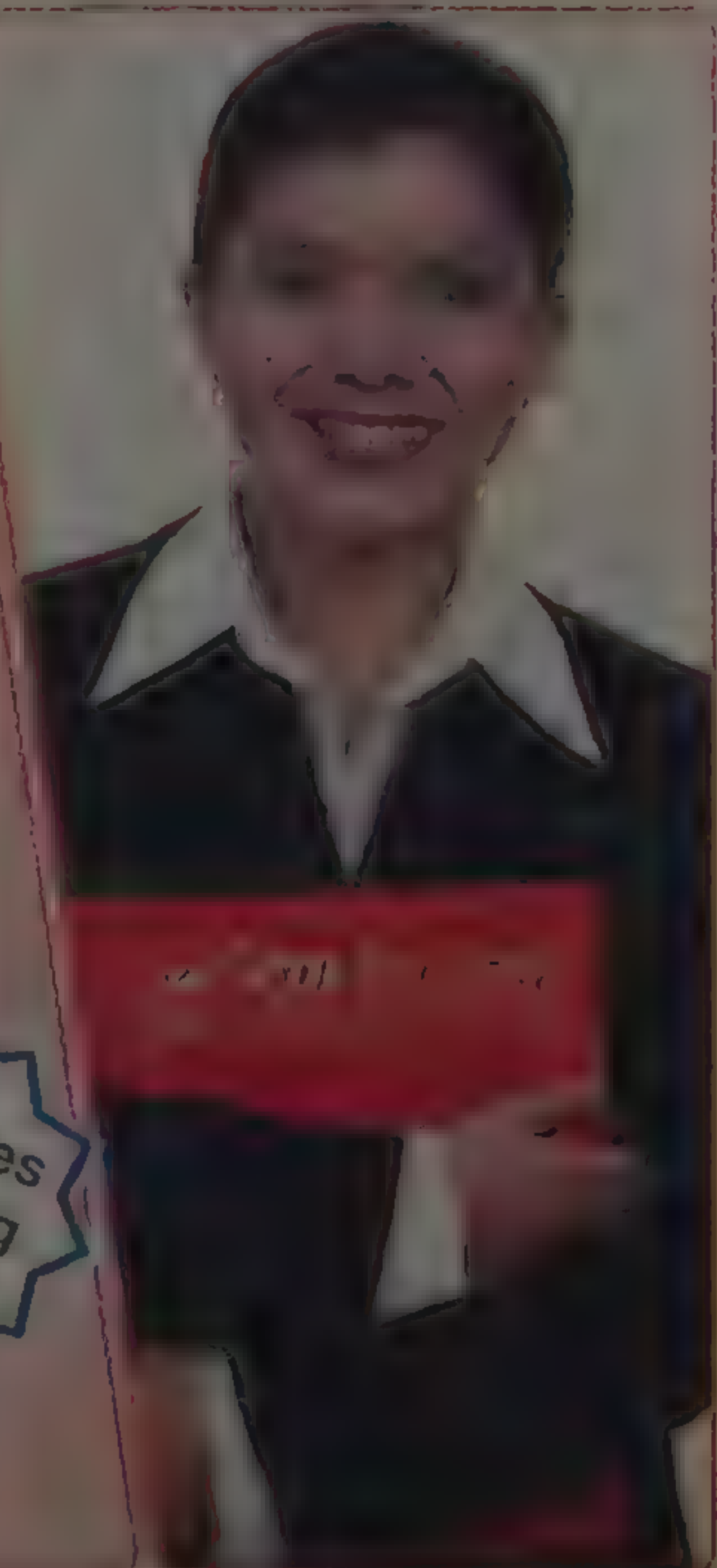
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instruct people on how to use the equipment. They are not personal trainers and are not equipped to design personal fitness programs.

Both NAIT and the University of Alberta offer much more extensive programs that can lead to actual certification.

NAIT offers a two-year Personal Fitness Trainer diploma program. They align their curriculum with the requirements of CSEP (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology), so students are eligible to write CSEP's Certified Personal Trainer exam once they graduate. This certification is only available to people that have at least two years of post-secondary training.

The next level of certification is CSEP's Certified Exercise Physiologist, requiring, at minimum, a four-year university degree in kinesiology or another related degree. Alternately, you can already be a health professional in an associated field, such as a physical therapist or doctor.

Leanne Telford, the Program Chair for NAIT's Personal Fitness Trainer program, recommends that anyone thinking about becoming a personal trainer first do a bit of research on the profession to make sure they are fully aware of what it entails. While the job itself is very gratifying, she stressed it's also hard work which usually involves very erratic hours. Because personal trainers work with a wide assortment of people, many of whom work 9 to 5 jobs, training can happen very early in the morning, late at night and any time in between. And, as with most professions, the salary can vary.

She recommends talking to various trainers who are working in the field today, as well as visiting different fitness organizations and gyms to see how they work and what they have to offer.

ALEXANDRA SENKOW, founder and company director of Defining Eve, went through the NAIT program back in 2000, when it was a shorter year-and-a-half program. Her journey to

becoming a personal trainer was a gradual process, and she readily admits that in high school she wasn't physically active at all. After finishing high school, she went to Israel to work in an agricultural commune and discovered that the elderly people she was working alongside were much fitter and stronger than she was. ~~Because they were more active in the~~ course of a normal day and did more physical labour.

When she came back to Edmonton four years later with an improved level of fitness—by virtue of the physical nature of the work she'd been doing and her lifestyle in Israel—she wanted to maintain her new-found level of fitness, but hit a few setbacks. Winter was a big one.

"It was very cold and there weren't the same opportunities to be physically active," she recalls. Instead of walking and cycling ~~where she was doing work~~ that involved physical labour was replaced with work that involved a lot of sitting. That's when the realization came to her: "To keep up that level of fitness I needed to do structured exercise. All the activity was being siphoned out of my day."

So she started working out at a gym, and says she fell in love with the way it made her feel. Back and neck pain started to diminish and she had much more energy. The end result was her enrollment in NAIT's Personal Fitness Trainer program.

Right from the beginning she didn't think people were treating personal trainers with respect—partly because of being in an unregulated industry where anyone can claim they're a personal trainer.

After she graduated, Senkow started out by training people in their homes, went mobile a couple of years later and in September 2004 opened up the first Defining Eve studio.

Senkow will only hire trainers that have either a NAIT diploma or a Bachelor of Kinesiology. She firmly believes that a personal trainer needs a strong foundation which is only achieved by extensive education—otherwise, she

argues, they can't acquire the necessary skills needed for quality exercise prescription. As she puts it, "Education is a huge part of what makes a trainer."

In return, the personal trainers she hires are treated with respect. In order to maintain some semblance of sanity in their family life, her full-time trainers work regular hours—either 6 am to 2 pm, or 1 pm to 9 pm. There's still no 9 to 5, but the hours are much less erratic than those that are seen elsewhere in the industry.

Senkow feels that personal training is about giving the client an education so that they can continue to train themselves. She also thinks there are a lot of false stereotypes out there. Sit down and watch TV and you'll get the impression that a personal trainer is kind of like a boot camp instructor—harsh and severe. At Defining Eve, personal trainers are more like mentors, designing exercises to recruit the right muscles and offering lifestyle advice to work fitness into everyday

activities. It's a lot less glamorous than the image depicted on TV, but it's also more rewarding.

LEANNE TELFORD says that the NAIT program focuses on hands-on experience to ensure that when students graduate, they are fully prepared to start a career. Students in the NAIT program get more than 100 hours of practical experience. During the third semester, the program recruits other students, staff and the public, and the students train three people for 16 hours each—twice a week for eight weeks. During their fourth semester, students do an additional 70 hours of professional experience outside of NAIT.

There is also a lot of theoretical background—around 300 hours a semester. Since some trainers go into business for themselves, there are also a couple of business courses as part of the curriculum. By way of comparison, achieving the AFLCA certification involves just 44 hours of instruction.

University graduates have a more global perspective and more defined critical-thinking skills. Their education is broader, their science background is stronger and, as a result, the graduates have an opportunity to go on to more diverse careers, such as working in cardio rehabilitation at the Glenrose or training elite athletes.

Like any other profession, the learning doesn't stop once you get your certification. There are professional development credentials achieved through approved courses and conferences, that need to be met every two years.

To be considered for NAIT's Personal Fitness Trainer program, applicants need to have Biology 30, Math 20 (pure or applied), and English 30 or 33. Chemistry 30 and Physical Education 30 are also strongly recommended. They also require a career investigation—just so potential students know what they're getting into. The next start date is August 2009, with an application deadline of March 31, 2009. ▼

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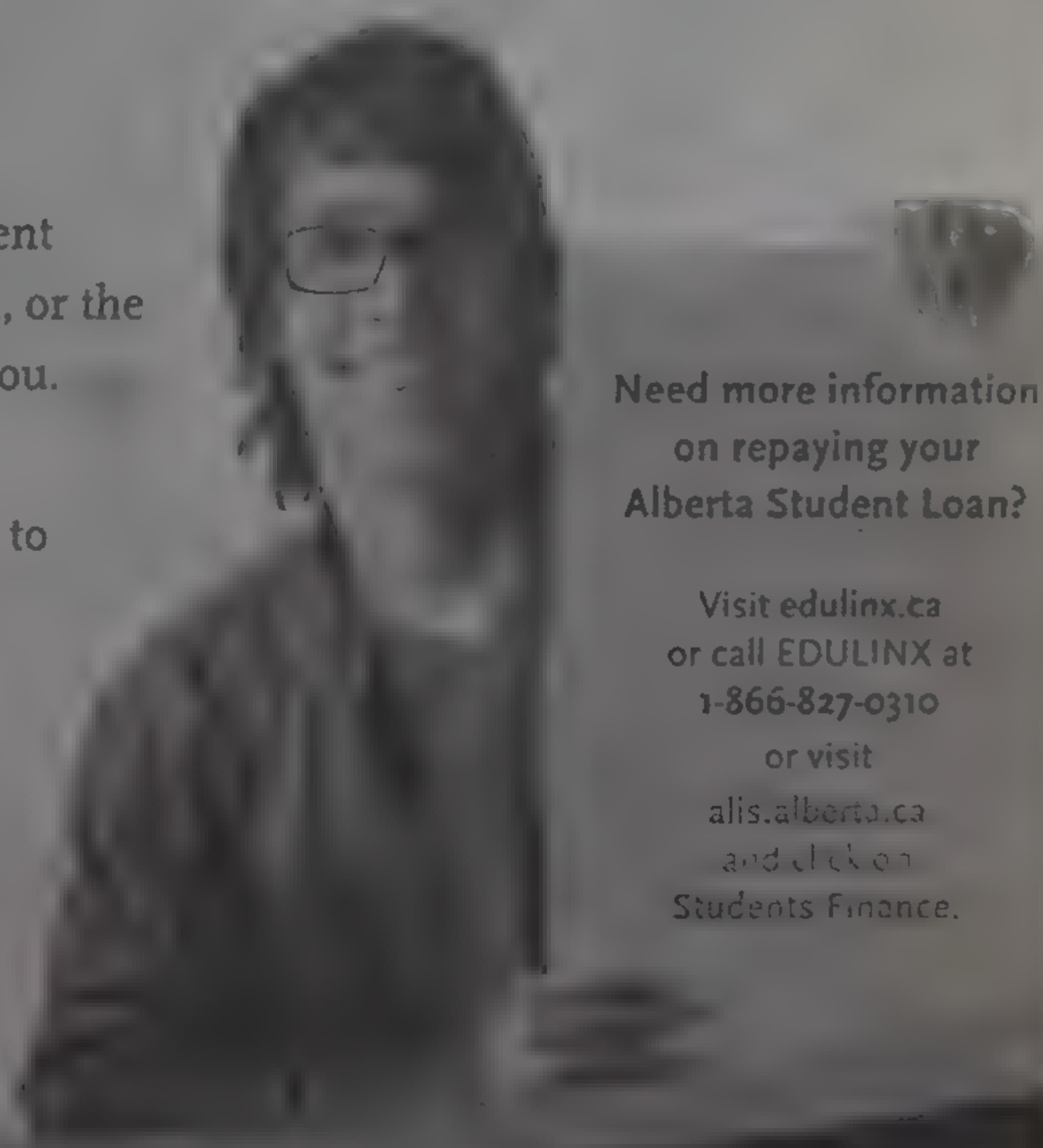
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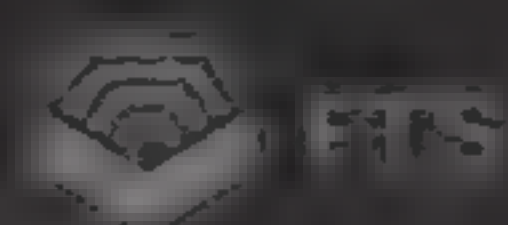
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A revolutionary school

In structure and content, fledgling Z Education Online is a radical school that aims to 'realize a new world'

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuwweekly.com

There are a few clues right from the outset that Z Education Online isn't a typical distance learning opportunity.

First, there's the list of classes available, with offerings including Participatory Society, Anarchisms Past and Future, Critical Perspectives on Corporate Media, Liberatory Lit: Imaginative Writing for Social Change and Family, Children and Sex: Elaborating a Kinship Vision.

Then there's the structure of the school and its decision-making process, which emphasizes self-management of both faculty and students, and remuneration for faculty based in part on the duration and intensity the various faculty members themselves feel they've put into the classes they teach.

Best of all, there's the tuition, which ranges from just \$50 to \$100 for a 10-week course.

It's all part of a new radical online educational initiative being developed by the Massachusetts-based Z Communications (that's zee, not zed), an alternative media group which over

LEARN Z EDUCATION ONLINE

the past two decades has developed an impressive range of resources and tools for progressives.

Since 1987 they've published the independent political monthly *Z Magazine* and in 1994 added ZNet, a mammoth online clearinghouse of left politics that attracts some three million visitors each month, with regular contributions from the likes of Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

But, explains Chris Spannos, one of just five staff at Z Communications and himself an instructor at Z Education Online (ZEO), it was the popularity of yet another Z initiative that was the impetus behind starting ZEO.

"Our other big educational component is the Z Media Institute, which happens every two years," he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



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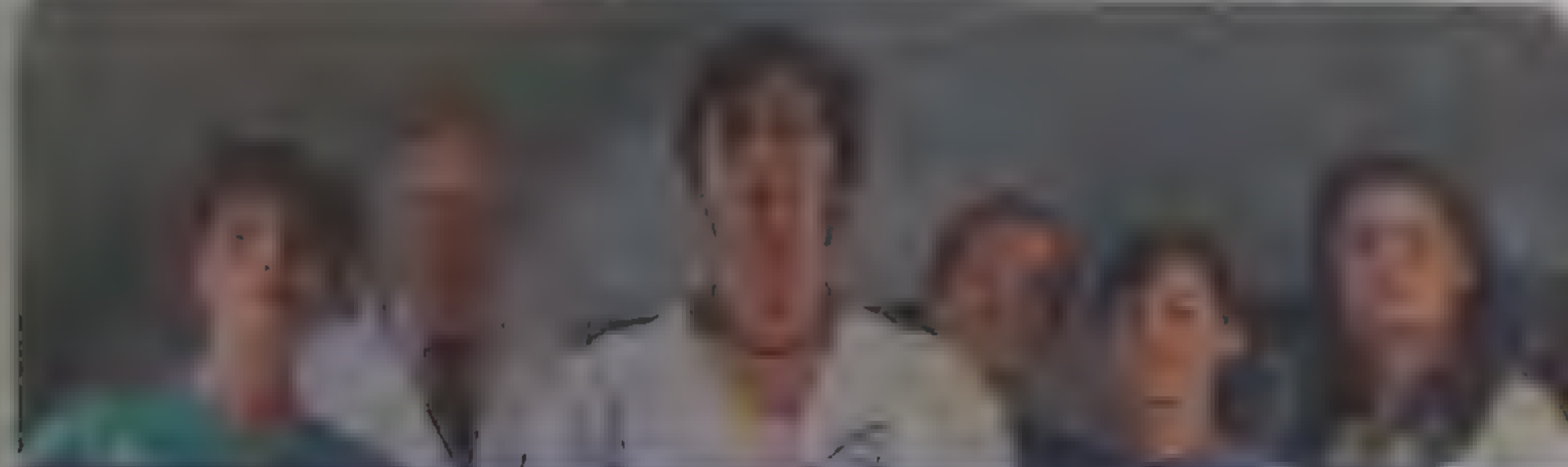
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Make sure your long time is a good time

International students share tips on things to consider before you embark on earning an entire degree abroad

KEENA ROSSITER / shana360weekly.com

Studying abroad has become increasingly popular over the years, and many university and college students find themselves signing up for an adventure abroad while dropping away at a few credits in their degrees. The University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan both offer study abroad programs all over the world—from Brazil to Turkey, from China to the United States—but by doing only a semester abroad students know their time is limited and the experience will quickly come to an end. But getting a whole degree abroad, as opposed to doing just a semester, is a great experience for anyone who is willing to try it out.

But without the “study globally and pay locally” policy in place, international students fees are typically about three times the rate of what locals in the country would pay. And by being on your own and not having a university at home to guide you, like you would if you were doing a semester exchange, students are typically responsible for their own food, housing and other housekeeping matters on their own. Immigration can also be a messy and lengthy process.

Because of these unique challenges, it's important that students to go into their foreign degrees with their eyes open—no matter how much travel or worldly experience they have.

We talked with four students who all came from different countries with different backgrounds to reflect on their foreign studies in the UK. Here's their advice on what people should be aware of when considering getting their entire degrees outside of their home country.

KNOW YOUR INDEPENDENCE

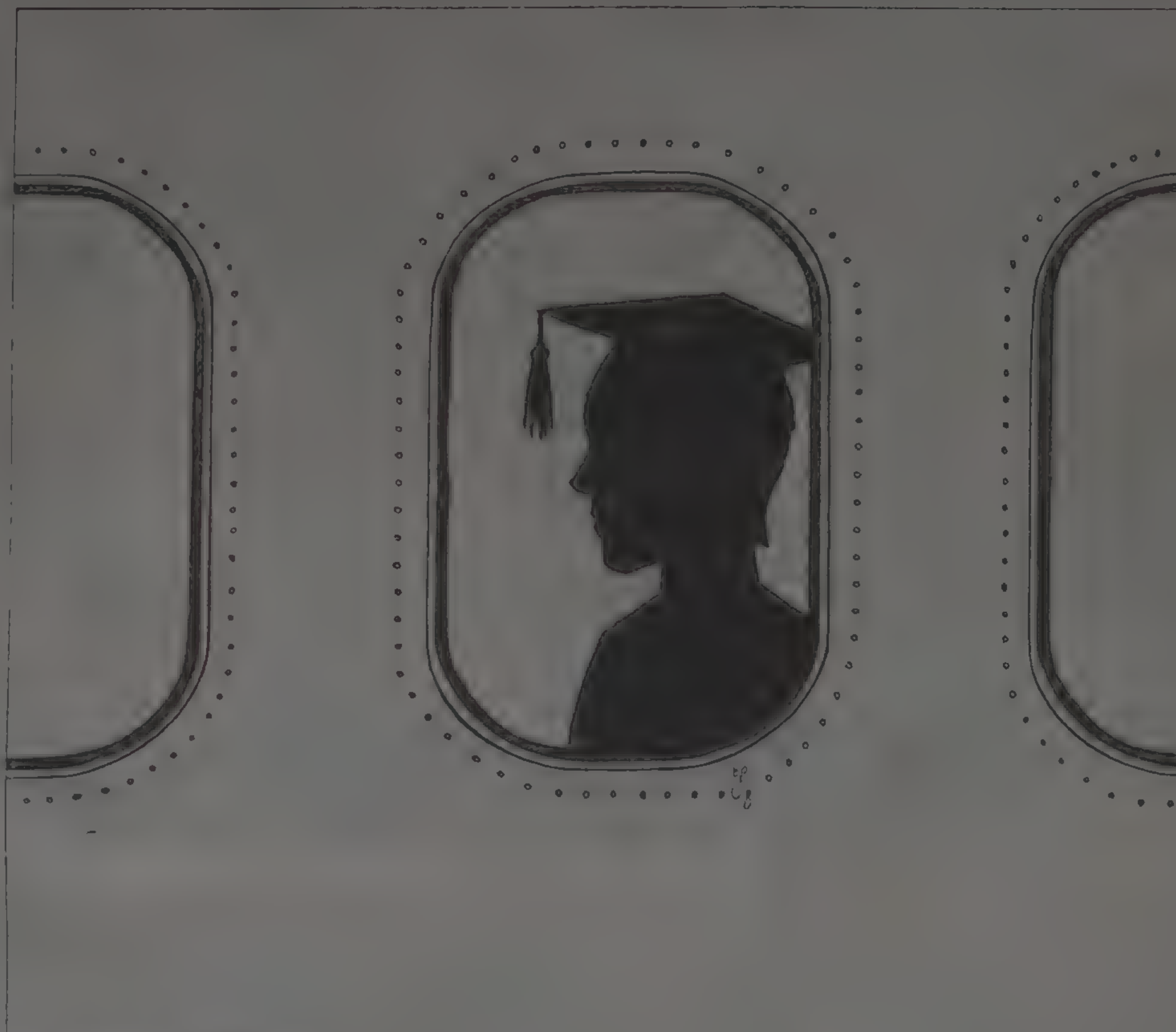
Before even entertaining the idea of leaving your friends, family and comfort zone of home behind, it's important to know yourself and to be independent enough to pack up and leave your comfortable life behind for an extended period of time.

Homesickness isn't uncommon, and even the most self-assertive, independent people still suffer from it from time to time. Real life still happens even when you're in a foreign country, and life becomes just as routine as it was when you were back home. However, now you don't know where anything is or necessarily have anyone to show you around.

The benefits outweigh the cons of studying abroad, but it's important to be aware of the potential to get homesick and to be aware of the challenges of being the new kid in the big city before committing to any lengthy program overseas.

VISIT THE CITY BEFORE

It's a good idea to take a pre-application/pre-decision trip to the city where the school you applied to is located. This way you can get to know the city and see if you can



LEARN DEGREES ABROAD

imagine yourself living there.

“Before I made the move over to [London] I spent about a month here to see if the city and the culture were really for me,” says Edmontonian Beverly Gan, 25, who is studying Fashion Design at Istituto Marangoni Italian Fashion School, based in London, UK. “It helped me get to know the city so I wasn't so overwhelmed when I moved over here in the fall with how London is, and how it works.”

Gan adds that her trip also gave her a perspective on how much living in London from month to month would really cost her. She was able to suss everything out—from the monthly cost of rent to the average price of a pint of beer.

However, with airfare prices going up and up as jet fuel prices increase, taking an international flight to the city you might call home over the next few years might not be economically feasible. But with the Internet, there are always virtual alternatives.

RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

The cost of living can be viewed by

surfing websites like Craigslist and Gumtree to see what the average room for rent is going for in the neighbourhood where you want to live. Go to the city's transport website to see how much monthly transport is going to cost you to get around the city. Check out menus online to see how much it would cost you to drink and eat out in your spare time. Even though it wouldn't be the same as experiencing the city itself, by checking out the prices to the essentials online it'll be easy to work out a ball-park budget before going overseas.

It's not a bad idea to use social networking sites to reach out and contact some of the former alumni of the program you're applying to. Join a network on Facebook or local chat forums, and contact those who have already done your program to find out what their experiences were like and to be aware of what you're getting yourself into. By contacting former students it's also easier to get a non-biased perspective on the institution.

“Check out to see where the alumni are working now, and, if possible, ask them personally why they did the course and what they thought about it,” says William Hilderbrandt, 29, from Norman, Oklahoma who did his MA in International Journalism at City University London two years ago.

Hilderbrandt ultimately chose City University over other UK universities since he knew what type of lifestyle he wanted after he finished the degree.

“I knew that I wanted to live in a big city in Europe, and that I wanted to establish myself in London rather than a smaller city within the UK,” he adds.

Reviews and feedback were two huge factors that helped him in his final decision, and the still London-based Hilderbrandt is glad that he did his research beforehand.

Despite having said that he could have done the program at home in the United States, he feels that the latent benefits of the program and being based in London helped him professionally.

CAN YOU DO THE PROGRAM AT HOME?

Since international student fees are so much higher than what you would pay at home, it's important to look at the benefits of doing your degree in a foreign country, as opposed to just staying home. Will you really be able to afford the tuition? How will you be able to live from month to month? Would this really enhance you and your resumé?

Nelly Gocheva, 27, is from Bulgaria and has done study abroad twice now. She did a translation diploma at McGill University in Montréal, and is now getting her MA in International Journalism at City University in Lon-

don. For Gocheva, it was fundamental to go abroad to complete both of her degrees.

“Originally in Bulgaria I got a degree in translation from Bulgarian to French. I was recommended the program at McGill by friends,” she says. “I was doing my diploma in French to English translation. The program at McGill was internationally renowned, and what better place to do a translation diploma in a city that was bilingual in the languages I was learning to translate?”

Karen Hersschens, 27, from Mol, Belgium got her Environmental and Civil Engineering degree at the University of Edinburgh because the quality of her program wasn't offered back in Belgium.

“Environmental Engineering was a new field at the time [in 2000], and it was also beneficial for me to do my degree in English,” she mentions.

Both Gocheva and Hersschens feel that they have increased their employability and potential pay rates by doing their degrees abroad, and the experience allowed them both to diversify themselves by learning and perfecting more languages.

In spite of both having spoken English quite well before moving to take their degrees abroad, both admitted that there were language barriers at times.

HOW DO YOU SAY ... ?

If you do decide to go to a country where the main language is not your native tongue, no matter what your fluency in the language, it's important to master slang and other pronunciation elements that textbooks can't teach you.

Language exchanges are a good idea to increase your language proficiency. By meeting once a week over a coffee, language exchanges create a free environment with a native speaker to ask any questions you want about the language you're trying to learn. Also, it makes for another social outing with someone from the city and culture to help show you around and teach you the ways and integrate you into the foreign culture. But best of all, it's free.

CONTACT YOUR EMBASSY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTRE

Most importantly, know your rights about being a Canadian in the country you are planning on going to, and register at the Canadian Embassy once you arrive. The fun of going abroad is in experiencing a different culture, but the difference in culture can also be the hassle. It's important to recognize these differences before going overseas, and to see the resources you have available to you both within the country and on your campus itself.

And, no matter what you do before you go abroad, don't forget your toothbrush. ▽

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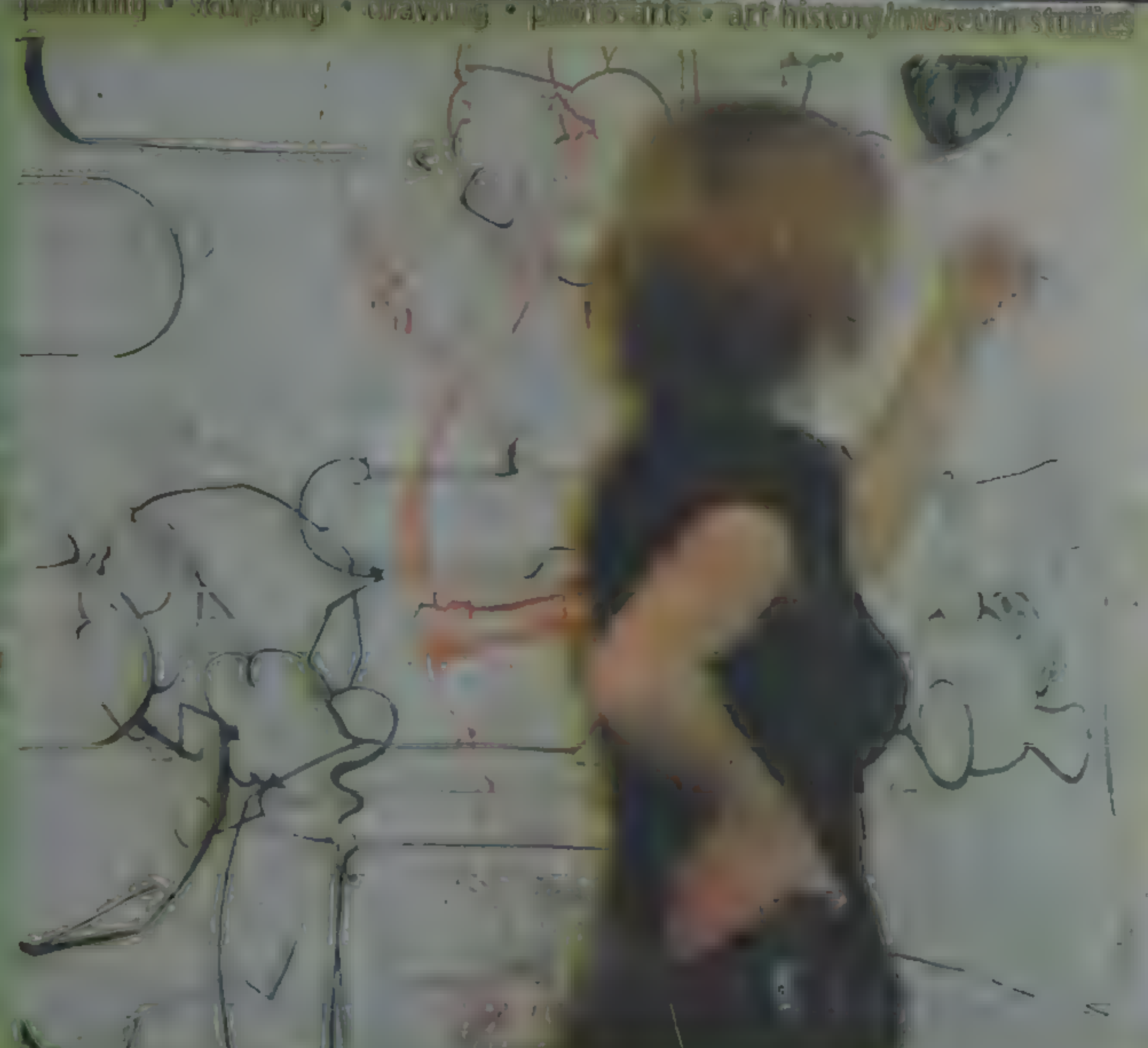
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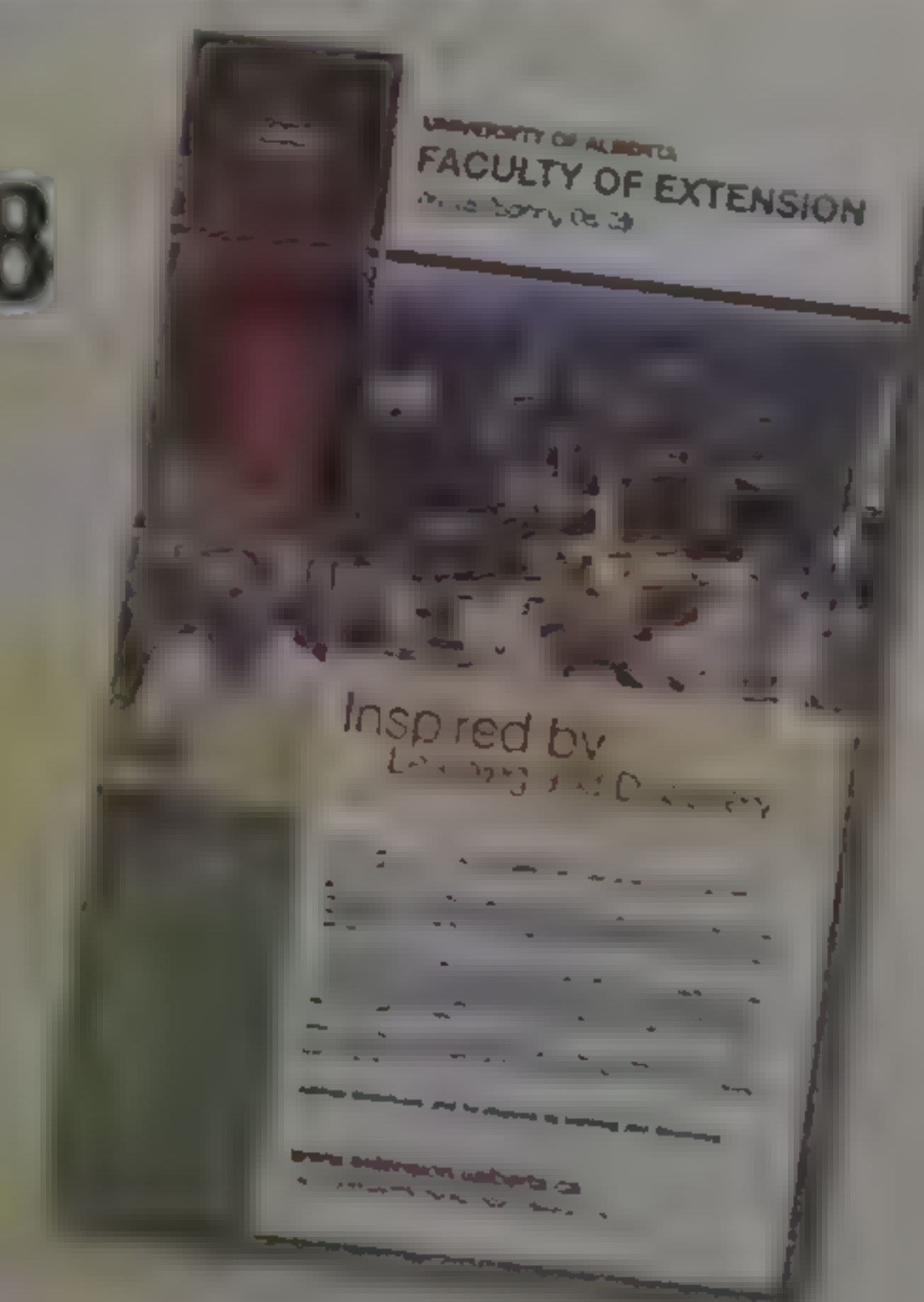
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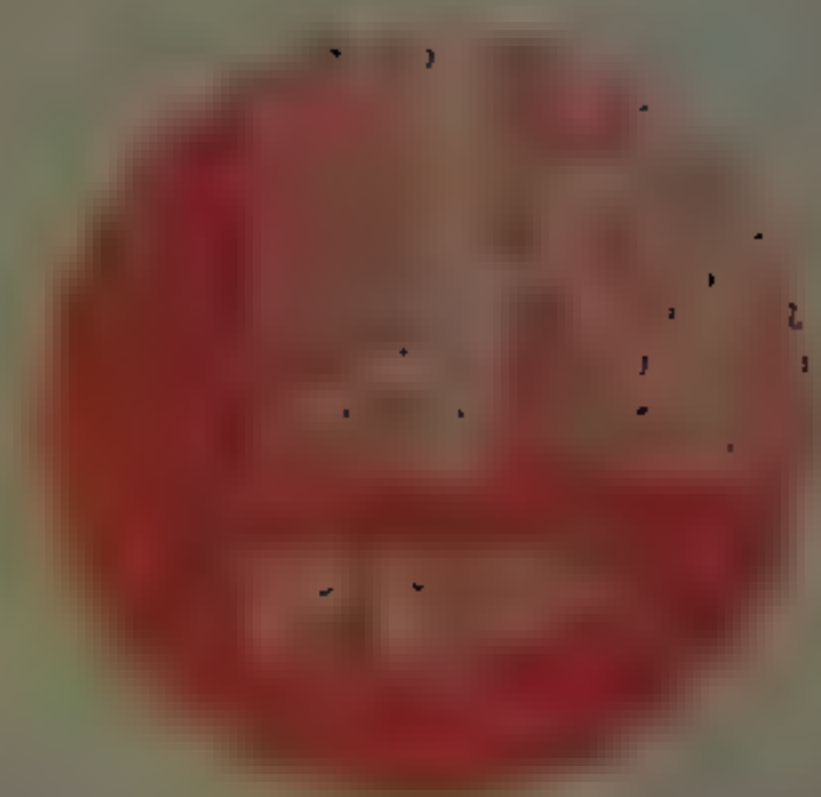
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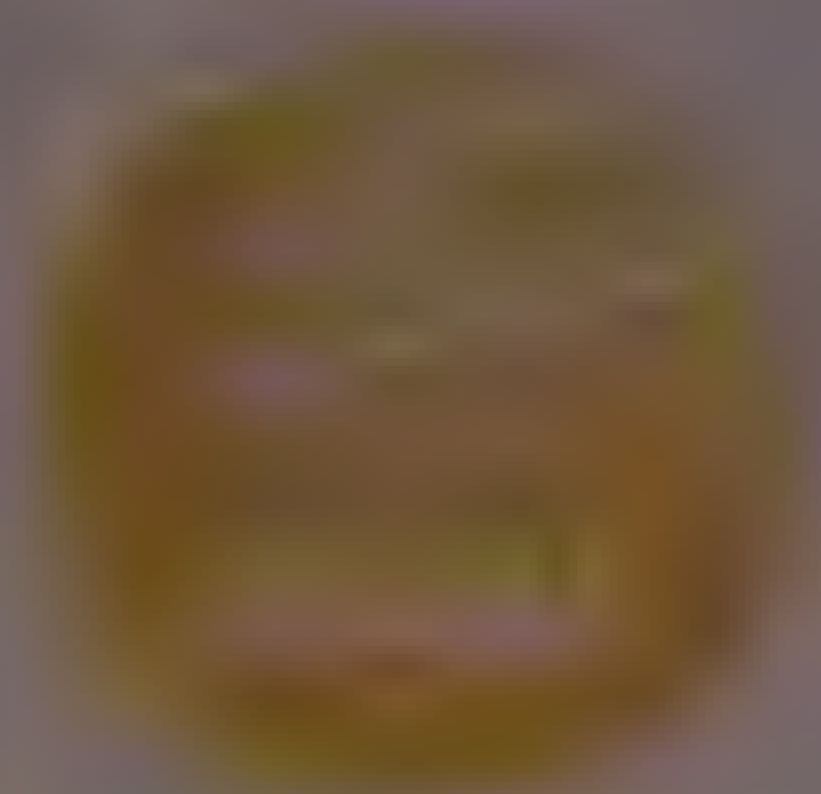
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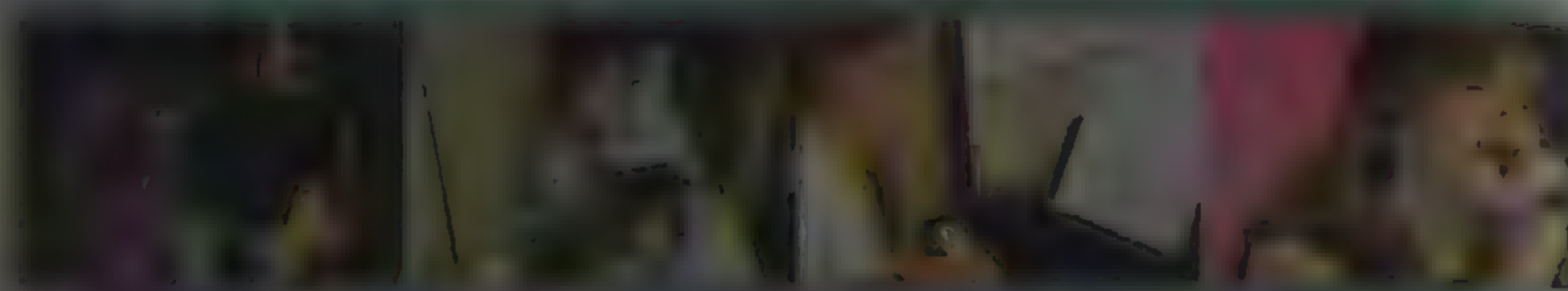
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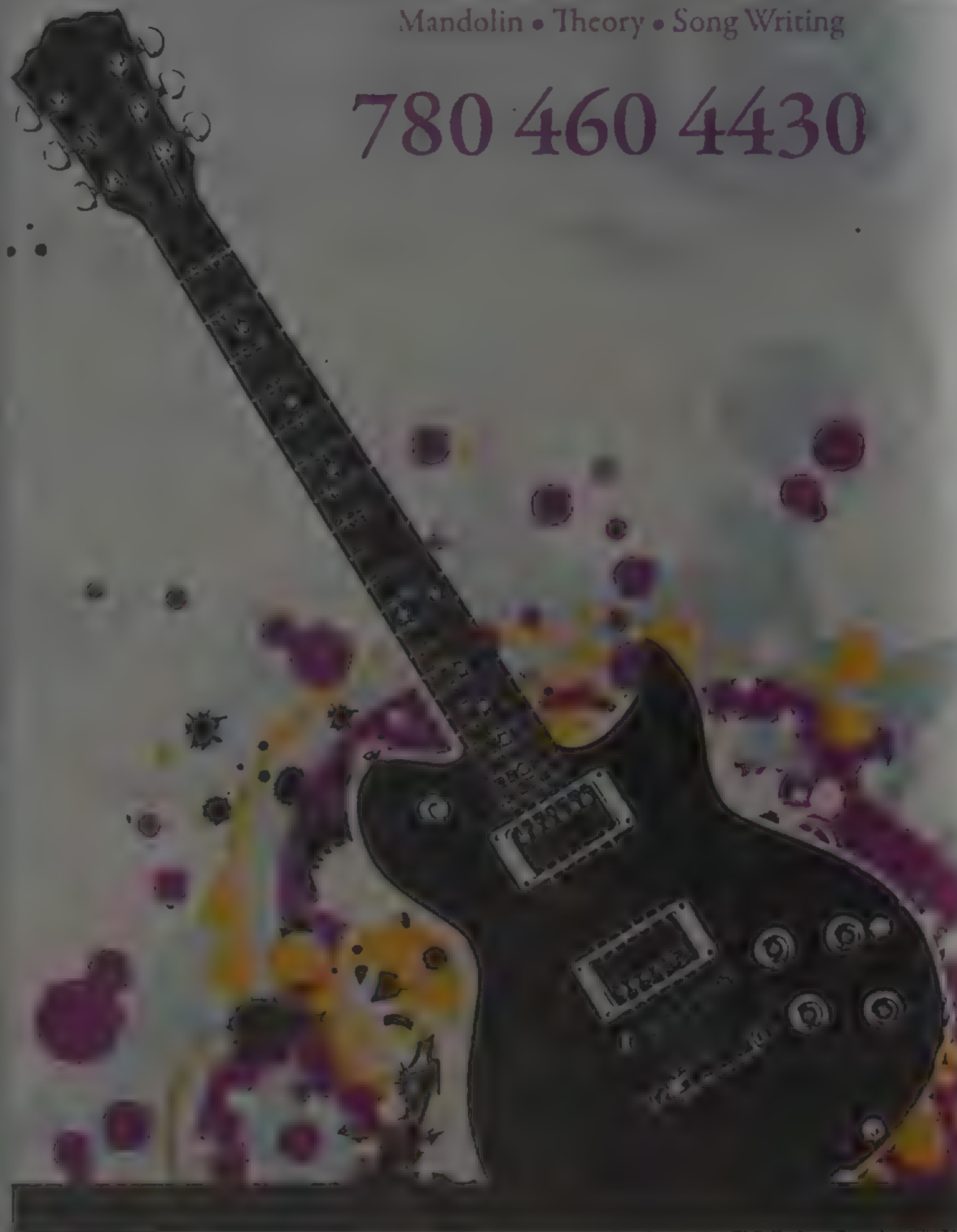
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Mastering a palette for your palate

Learning the culinary arts offers independence and the chance to know julienne from brunoise

BY LYNCH / hardly@vancouverweekly.com

If you eat in Edmonton, you probably know about NAIT's **Culinary Arts Program**, graduates from which staff many of our city's restaurants. But culinary arts at NAIT doesn't stop at full-time programs—they also offer a battery of continuing education classes on a huge variety of topics, for us minor-league players who want to step up our game.

When browsing through the course list, which includes such subjects as Thai food, wine tasting and basic mixology, something in particular caught my eye—a series of kitchen skills courses, five in all, that promised to improve basic culinary knowledge.

Now, I am an enthusiastic cook and an eager learner, and I know my way around the kitchen. I can read a recipe and I've got a good food vocabulary. But I cook in chaos, my kitchen a whirlwind of knives, bowls and dirty cutting boards, with food everywhere. I make good food, but often at the expense of my nerves. What I wanted was to improve my technique and to build better basics. So I decided to sign up for NAIT's first "Kitchen Skills" course: The Art of Garde Manger and Knife Skills.

When I arrived for the first of the three four-hour courses, I was nervous, afraid my knife skills wouldn't be good enough or that my fellow students would all be chefs. My trepidation was put to rest when my fellow students introduced themselves. We were a diverse group—men who'd never cooked before (interestingly, there were no kitchen-virgins among the women), people looking to pick up knife skills and others who were experienced recipe-followers and just wanted to learn more independence in the kitchen.

This diversity is the norm, according to Abraham Wornovitzky, the hospitality/culinary arts portfolio manager. Wornovitzky says "don't be afraid if you don't have any experience." You'll gain a lot of confidence. Alternately, people who think they know a lot find that the course "changes the way they view cooking."

Our instructors, Allan Roote and James Higuchi—both experienced chefs—agree. Roote, who has 23 years of experience under his toque, says improving your cooking skills can help you "move out of mom's house," and emphasizes the independence cooking offers, saying it lets you move from "processed foods" to a more "grassroots" approach. Higuchi, who assisted Roote and has been cooking professionally since he was 16, also wants to make sure his students feel more independent while gaining a "basic understanding of certain types of cooking."

Our instructors wanted us to be independent, but they didn't let us off the hook for shoddy work. We worked first on basic knife skills, chopping dozens of carrots into rounds, matchsticks (julienne) and cubes as tiny as a

LEARN CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

millimetre (brunoise). I thought I was doing okay, until Roote stopped by my station to critique my carrot rounds. They weren't all the same thickness. I can feel you rolling your eyes, but it makes a difference. We eat with our eyes first of all, and small inconsistencies make a big difference in appearance. There is also a practical application to consistency—if your ingredients are different sizes, they cook at different rates, resulting in over- or under-cooked bits.

Higuchi also noticed my sub-par skills. When we proceeded to the second part of our course, creating sandwiches, he assigned me the task of cutting bread into equal squares that would be piled in alternating rows to create a checkerboard pattern. Simple, right? Well, my bread pile looked like an Aztec pyramid, not a cube.

YOU MIGHT THINK this sounds more like *Hell's Kitchen* than continuing ed, but in fact our instructors were encouraging and enthusiastic. Roote invited interested students to come in



to class an hour early on our last night to participate in a cheese-making demonstration. When I say participate, I mean it. We scalded our hands stretching fresh mozzarella, and I brought home a good-sized chunk that I used on homemade pizza the very next day.

Higuchi says that his aim in teaching is not to "give people free rein to go and do whatever they want but to trust themselves," and gain "independence." While we were following recipes and practicing our technique, Higuchi was

constantly asking us if we were happy with our product, and if we weren't (or if he wasn't), asking what we could do to improve our food. He exhorted us to "make it sexy."


Roote didn't talk about sex, but he did talk about love. When we were making mayonnaise, he told us not to attempt the recipe while angry, saying "if you don't apply love to your food, it's not gonna work." Wornovitzky echoed this sentiment, saying that while professionals might be more pragmatic about food, "at the end of the day, it's

called culinary arts for a reason."

Much of this course was informed by the instructors' professional backgrounds—we arranged displays of our finished products on mirrored plates and discussed symmetry and size with an eye for what looks the best to the "consumer." A home cook often pays no heed to these matters. However, Roote says that one of his goals as an instructor is to give his students the ability to "understand the effort" that's put into the food we order in restaurants.

There was plenty in the course for home cooks too. I took home a lot more than fresh mozzarella, a litre of homemade mayo and a full spread of sandwiches and canapes. I gained an awareness of presentation, better skills with a knife, and a new appreciation for what goes into food prep, both in my own kitchen and at restaurants. Plus, my countertops are a little cleaner. Whether you're an experienced home cook, an aspiring chef or a knife-wielding novice, there's room for you to learn in this course. Wornovitzky advises you to "just try it once—it's a little addictive." It's true—I'm already looking forward to my next course.

Looking for even more kitchen-related learning? Check out NAIT's Culinary Boot Camp on page 23.




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Z EDUCATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

explains. "We take between 60 and 70 student applications and they all come here to Woods Hole, Massachusetts on Cape Cod and engage in a very intensive nine-day session with probably about 30 faculty members, mostly Z writers from around the world, so a very international participant base between student and faculty."

While more than 700 students have attended ZMI since it started in 1994, taking a range of courses on radical politics, media training, organizing tactics and developing vision and strategies for social change, Z staff saw the need to make such offerings more widely available.

"Because that happens once every two years we decided this Z Education Online would provide more opportunity for education along the lines that we propose in all the other projects under Z Communications as a whole: vision and strategy, radical political theory, democratic workplace organization, mainstream media critiques, how to win as alternative media, alternative media structures, what it means to be alternative media, US foreign policy, economics, political economy, anti-racism, the whole gamut. We're trying to propose a strategy and an analysis to realize a new world."

A recent overhaul of the ZNet site made it possible to offer courses similar to those taken by a couple dozen students once every two years to anyone

with an internet connection anywhere in the world on an ongoing basis.

"Being online makes it easier in a sense of opening up opportunities that didn't exist," Spannos says. "You don't have a campus that everybody goes to—people come here to ZMI once every two years, but they can be anywhere to participate in Z Education Online."

ZED CLASSES are offered through an open source course management system called Moodle, which was specifically designed for online learning and is used by many mainstream universities and colleges, including nearby MIT.

Through Moodle, faculty interact with registered students through a range of applications, posting weekly lectures in the form of essays, audio or video files, presenting students with questions and reading lists to guide their learning, and interacting with them through forums, live chats and wikis.

But while there's a range of technical options available to faculty through Moodle, what they choose to use and how they go about structuring the class is up to them alone, as are almost all of the decisions about the class. It's part of a conscious attempt to structure the school around an idea developed by Z founder Michael Albert and his collaborator Robin Hahnel of an alternative way to conceptualize work and the economy, which they termed participatory economics, or parecon.

"We tried to organize ZEO in such a way that would be close to the vision that we hold ourselves. So we have

this vision of a participatory society, a participatory economics, and underlying that philosophy are the ideals of self-management, where people have a decision-making say in proportion to the degree that they are affected. Solidarity, where people care about each other, equity and diversity, the diverse outcomes for society in our media projects, diverse content in our education, diverse curriculum."

The commitment to the parecon ideal of worker self-management also means that which courses will be taught are proposed by the faculty—right now made up primarily of longtime Z contributors—and if a course suggestion is rejected by Z staff working on ZEO, that decision can be appealed to the faculty as a whole and overturned.

"So there's these interesting facets about how we're approaching the educational model that we're embarking on that's very different than university courses and how curriculum is chosen for that," Spannos says. "I don't know of a single university where anybody can propose a course and be accepted or rejected but then have an appeals process to the rest of the faculty and it being approved. Basically the faculty are the decision makers."

Students, too, are encouraged to organize into a council of their own to put forward suggestions for improvement to the courses and the school as a whole, and one suggestion, the need for regular "office hours" to give students the opportunity to interact with their instructors, has already been implemented.

Following an initial free trial run which attracted about 600 students the first regular 10-week session of the school began on October 13, with approximately 150 students now taking part in 10 courses on vision and strategy, international relations, media and arts. The goal is to offer four 10-week semesters a year with an expanding list of course offerings. Spannos says the next semester will start early in the new year, likely in February or March.

While Spannos, who is teaching an introductory course on participatory society, admits it's a modest start, he sees great potential in the project to someday provide large numbers of people with the tools and knowledge to be critical and active citizens.

"We have a pretty diverse range of courses and the idea is that we hope this will grow, we think there's lots of potential and we hope it develops more and more. We're still learning new ways to enhance the user experience—both for the faculty and for the students—to provide some form of interaction online that you usually would get more of on campus somewhere face-to-face with everybody else. Overcoming that hurdle in online education, as new as we are at it, is a challenge, but there are little tricks that we're getting better at," he says.

"It's only our second time so how it will actually develop, it's a little too soon to tell, but we're hopeful." ▽

For more information on Z Communications and Z Education Online, visit zmag.org.

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Tuesday, November 18th

- Social Work

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Earning his Stripes

Ballet Master has AB ready and able for season opener, no matter what happens

Two weeks ago in Calgary, shortly before the curtain rose on opening night of Alberta Ballet's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of the lead dancers informed Edmund Stripe that he would be unable to perform that evening.

"The show was at 7:30. Jonathan Olivier who was to play Oberon, got a phone call at five o'clock from his pregnant wife saying that she had gone into labour and her contractions were just five minutes apart. So he rushed off to be with her," says Stripe, who was well prepared for the situation, having prearranged for the alternate evening's cast step into the roles of Oberon and Titania.

"By the time the intermission had come, the baby had been born, and Jonathan was back with us the next night—very tired though," laughs Stripe, who adds that Olivier and his partner simply took on the lead roles

DANCE

FRI, NOV 7, SAT, NOV 8 (7:30 PM)
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
PRESENTED BY ALBERTA BALLET
OUTREACH PARTNER OF CALGARY ORCHESTRA
JUBILEE AUDITORIUM (11455-87 AVE), \$30-\$90

the evening after the baby was born.

"So it all worked out very nicely," says the ballet master, whose job is to deal with last-minute cast changes, along with every other aspect of a production. He's the mysterious man behind the scenes who assures all goes smoothly, beginning with the first step in the studio to the last curtain call of a show.

Much of Stripe's time is spent in rehearsal with the dancers, whether it's his own choreography or that of somebody else. So although *Midsummer Night's Dream* was choreographed by Christopher Wheeldon, it was Stripe who taught the complex material to the company, first in

2003 and then again this year. "It was up to me to remount the ballet without Christopher being there," says Stripe, "and then he just came for the last week and checked that everything was ship-shape."

STRIPE HAS DANCED extensively in various versions of the ballet during a prestigious career that began when he was a child. "The first time I performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was the English production by the Royal Ballet. I was chosen when I was 11 years old, which was a great experience for me because I got to be onstage with some great dancers of the time," says Stripe, naming the famous Rudolph Nureyev as having performed in that production.

"Then, many years later when I was living and working in Australia, I was with a company called the Australian Ballet. We produced a full-length ver-

COVER PHOTO BY NEST PHOTO

Get Fuzzfly-y

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vuwweekly.com

Sometimes all it takes is a phone call. That's what brought world-beat musical collective Le Fuzz and aerial theatre group Firefly Theatre together for their now-annual collaboration: a call from Le Fuzz member Jason Kodie to Firefly's aerial headmistress Annie Dugan.

"He called me and said that people thought of the circus when they thought of Le Fuzz's music," Dugan says. "And he thought it would be really great if we'd want to come and do some aerial during their show."

So Dugan and two other Firefly-ers joined Le Fuzz onstage for *Fuzzfly*, a showcase of both groups that's now entering its third incarnation.

Although Dugan usually pulls inspiration from wherever she finds it, developing an aerial act from the band's music is just as good of a starting point as any.

"The music is strong, so it really sets the tone of the piece," she explains. "And then I guess it's our job to make a picture of the song. I enjoy it; I love to create from music just as much as I love to create from an idea. It's also a challenge, because it is coming from outside. We're given a CD, and we have

PREVIEW

FRI, NOV 7 (8 PM), SAT, NOV 8 (2 & 8 PM)
FUZZFLY
FEATURING LE FUZZ, FIREFLY THEATRE
THEATRE DE LA CITE FRANCOPHONE (3627-91 ST)

to listen to the songs and think about what we do."

LE FUZZ have some extra guests involved this year: a filmmaker will be taking cues from the music as well, providing additional visuals based on the countries that inspired Le Fuzz's latest batch of songs. Coupled with further song information in the program and a Saturday afternoon post-show workshop for any children in attendance, *Fuzzfly* seems to be veering dangerously close to "educational" territory. But Dugan doesn't seem concerned about the show lacking any dazzle. At least not on her part, anyway.

"One of the reasons that Le Fuzz writes in different languages is they want to share the various cultures with everyone. I guess it's educational if you want it to be, but it could also simply be entertainment, or what's that word? Education." She laughs. "Our portion is simply entertainment." ▼

Looking-glass Palace

Thompson's play proves hard to watch but even harder to forget

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vuwweekly.com

There's a reoccurring theme going through Judith Thompson's *Palace of the End*: of passing the looking glass, a fantasy motif that works a dark wonder here. The pull-no-punches script does seem like something out of a Grimm storybook, a strange fantasy... except that it's grounded in the reality of modern warfare, a real mirror-world where ordinary people compromise the most basic of human rationality and rights or have their own compromised under the guise of political gain. Based on true stories of modern war, it's a tightly executed script that draws you into its collection of atrocities with compelling force.

Divided into three monologues, each backed by a beautiful, simple set from David Frasier, we're presented with testimonials from three figures of war: a female American soldier, a British weapons inspector and a

REVUE

UNTIL SUN, NOV 16 (8 PM)
PALACE OF THE END
DIRECTED BY MARIANNE COPITHORNE
STARRING NAIDEN CHU, JOHN WRIGHT,
NATASCHA GIGGIS
THE ROXY (10708-124 ST), \$21-\$27

member of the Iraqi Communist party. These aren't the usual voices chiming in about the war, but even if they were, I doubt they'd be voiced with such raw power in both script and unanimous acting prowess. *Palace of the End* doesn't so much point a finger as it illuminates the dark corners of modern warfare, the emotional, human side that often gets buried under sterile reports.

Naiden Chu opens the show with "My Pyramids," based on the female recruit forever scandalized in the Abu Ghraib photos. We find her pregnant and awaiting trial, sent off to wait at a trivial office job as a ceiling fan does lazy arcs above



her desk, trying not to google herself. The script penetrates the reasoning behind her actions—a not-too-bright girl who "got fired from DQ," tired of being teased until, she boasts, "they saw what I can do"—and Chu does an astute job of flip-flopping between begging for sympathy (demanding to know how we'd like our "one weirdest second" captured and scandalized across the world) and making more sinister statements and punchy lines like "We've done far worse than you seen," resonate with unsettling power.

IF CHU'S CHARACTER was depicted by the actions taken, "Harrowdown Hill" looks at inaction, and one man's inability to stand up for the truth. John Wright

embodies Dr David Kelly, a biological warfare expert with a laundry list of accolades and appraisals since disgraced for leaking information to the press. We find him sitting under a tree, bleeding, and recounting his own failures with a quiet, growing sadness. "Have you ever told an unforgiveable lie?" he asks us, and the magnitude of his failed tale, delivered with a slow-burning sincerity, is haunting. Its most revealing moments are heightened by simple lighting effects and sound.

Both of those sound pretty grim, but Thompson's injected enough dark humour into the script to balance with the tragedy of the tales. Part of the script's genius is its ability to turn from laugh to gasp in a moment, nestling

lighter statements—like Chu's non-sense declaration that, like Napoleon, one day she'll return to America a hero—in among the serious moments. Even the last monologue, arguably the most weighty of the three, maintains that balance. It's called "Instruments of Yearning," and shows the non-Western side of the issues, looking at of the despair caused within Saddam's reign to members of the Iraqi Communist Party. Natascha Giggis plays her character with graceful dignity, even as she recounts the horrors of her torture.

Palace of the End is a gripping show, one that stays with you long after you pass back through its looking glass. It's difficult to watch, but harder to forget. ▼

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Terrifying creativity

A writer tries to come to grips with what he's written in *Largo Desolato*

XANTHE COUTURE / xantho@vuweekly.com

The creative process can be a claustrophobic and lonely one. Add in to the mix having been imprisoned for your work and the ability to break through the wall of self-doubt and uncertainty would be especially difficult.

This is the case for Professor Leopold Nettles (Joel Crichton), who brings to life the experiences of dissident playwright and the first president of the Czech Republic. *Largo Desolato* was written during Havel's trials of intellectual censorship under the Communist government, and as director Beau Coleman observes, applies to today's post 9/11 climate of fear and government monitoring. Studio Theatre's production of the tale of intellectual repression is a success in its task to be quick witted with the dialogue timed as if to a methodical rhythm.

Under Coleman's lead, Havel's self-deprecating humour and serious undertones of constant fear in a police state are balanced with sharp characters that bring humanity to their selfish personalities. At times, Havel's script delves into aspects of Theatre of the Absurd, with the repetition of dialogue and scenarios such as Leopold's self-imposed confinement make him more and more paranoid. The flow of these instances is without fault, as Leopold paces around his apartment, having the same conversations and doing the same series of actions over and over.

Holleay Rohm's role as Leopold's exasperated and unsympathetic wife, Suzana, is a force, as her physical stature and cold statements shrink Leopold down to size. The lack of sympathy from his wife leads Leopold to turn to the flamboyant Lucy (Tess Degenstein).

Leopold's life becomes a revolving door of visitors ranging from the coming and goings of his wife and her lover,

REVUE

UNTIL SAT, NOV 8 (7:30 PM)

LARGO DESOLATO

DIRECTED BY BEAU COLEMAN

WRITTEN BY KACER HAVEL

STARRING JOEL CRICHTON, MARI CHARTIER, JOSH

DALLMAN, TESS DEGENSTEIN

TIMMS CENTRE (87 AVE & 112 ST) \$11.50 - \$21

Eddie (Joëlle Préfontaine), his lo Lucy, his concerned friend Bertran series of nervous actions acted al without flaw by Joshua Dalledonne well as two men who are from "paper mill," but who are part of the movement Nettles has inspired. Other more sinister visits are from the secret police, who rattle Leopold to no end and try to wear down his ability to reason and defend himself.

BUT THE PLAY also ends at a high level, as Havel seems to poking fun at his own ego of the academic who has been charged with a higher moral code that he is willing to write about but not necessarily ready to fight for. Leopold laments that his life was so much easier when no one cared about his philosophical reflections and he could wander the park and read and write for his own leisure.

Being confronted with threat of losing his name to protect himself from further imprisonment sends Leopold into a tailspin, as he must decide to rise above or cower to the powers that be. His academic life has become his only identity, if he disowns his work or continues not to be able to write due to anxiety, who is he?

A new play called *Leaving* written by Havel has recently taken to the stage. The piece also draws on Havel's own experiences, except this time as the Czech president. So it seems although *Largo Desolato* finished with a more troubling conclusion, the real Leopold has managed to rise out of his creative an anxious state. ▽

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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

CONTAINS AN ENTIRE PIRE-KAT PAGE

sion of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I played the role of Bottom across Australia and Asia over 100 times during six or seven years," he says.

Stripe was sounding cheerfully British on the phone from Calgary's AB studios. He was taking a very quick break from choreographing his own version of *The Nutcracker*, a world premiere to be held in Edmonton next month, and there's good reason why Stripe was chosen to recreate the famous work. He constructs beautiful, eloquent works for companies around the world, and, of course, for Alberta Ballet, whose repertoire includes among others, his *Alice in Wonderland*, and his exquisite *Piano Concerto #2 Opus 102*, originally created for Singapore Dance Theatre.

Recently Stripe was invited there to remount the work as part of their anniversary celebrations.

In fact, his stunning choreography has garnered worldwide attention, and he was the first Canadian invited to participate in the National Choreographers Initiative in California, where he had the freedom recently to simply experiment with the choreographic process and some top-notch dancers without being concerned about creating a finished product. "That was a real gift," he says, of the much-needed break from his demanding career.

As for his work on Wheeldon's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Stripe is highly confident in the company, which is continuously improving, and now gaining recognition as one of Canada's best.

"I think this cast is extremely strong," he says. "It's a fantastic show all scrubbed up very beautifully again. It's a lovely ballet, a lovely piece." ▽

Have you read ... ?

BOOKS | HOPSCOTCH

There is a threshold that divides the perfectly sound criticism of movies from another literary pursuit, foolishly ambitious, irredeemably obsessive, inevitably laced with something like memoir, a writing that makes pleas for its existence completely apart from the work, if not the whole labyrinthine medium, it addresses. I understand, you may or may not want to take on what's delivered from the far side of that threshold, though I've always found that it's precisely where things start to get genuinely interesting. There've been several writers who've blazed a trail through this thorny terrain, but I have a special admiration for the British-born David Thomson, whose one-man encyclopedia, *The Biographical*

Dictionary of Film, remains a mind-boggling text, among the most compulsively perused books I own, full of aphoristic flights, brilliant observations and enraging dismissals, not to mention ordinary old movie lust.

Have You Seen ... ?: A Personal Introduction to 1000 Films (Knopf, \$45) is a sort of companion to *The Biographical Dictionary*, another sprawling tome of filmic considerations that scale the medium's century-plus trajectory. Honestly, my impression is that he's not completely sure what these selections collectively constitute, but the number itself seems important: "going for a thousand is a gesture toward history like wondering whether Beowulf can talk to Lolita." It should be stressed that *Have You Seen?* is not a compendium of previously published reviews, or even, most impressively, previously aired opinions, but a wholly realized project all its own. Every title, from *Paris, Texas* ("I'm not sure that many films are as moving and as incoherent") to

Stalker ("I am in awe of the power—yet I have an itch to see Bob Hope playing the *Stalker*"), and every artist, from Mickey Rourke ("a poet, if someone could lay down the length of his lines") to Ingmar Bergman ("the saint of lives that may think they are settled"), is newly surveyed.

Thomson once wrote that there's no effect more special than an actor changing his or her mind, and for those familiar with Thomson's arguments, there's pleasure to be found in seeing how the writer, too, changes his mind. As evident in the irreverent compliment to *Stalker* above, it appears Thomson's finally come around in a big way to Andrei Tarkovsky, and he's learned to love the morbid lyricism that underlies the films of Val Lewton, once derided for his "B-movie philosophy." There are other filmmakers whose work Thomson seems to have appraised only recently and is still catching up with—how else to explain the inclusion of both *A History of Violence* and *Eastern Promises* but nothing else from David Cronenberg?

Weirder still, we get Thomson's praise for *To Die For* and *Happy Together*, the former the book's sole selection from Gus Van

Sant, the latter it's only Wong Kar-Wai. At least Van Sant and Wong get mentions—there isn't a single film from Aki Kaurismäki, Pedro Costa, Shohei Imamura or Jim Jarmusch entered in this book that nevertheless makes room for *Mary Reilly*, *The Thomas Crown Affair* and *Yentl*.

FLAMBOYANT SUBJECTIVITY, incompleteness and even contrarianism is, of course, part of the point of *Have You Seen?* Thomson knows that opinion and analysis both need to be fluid and flexed to stay alive. He's taken it upon himself to hold every classic up to the highest standard, deliberately sniffing out flaws in masterpieces, while he pounds his fists on a few occasions to make cases for the overlooked and under-loved. And when Thomson returns to work he's examined previously and thoroughly, he often delivers his finest prose of all, breathtaking, penetrating the very heart of something, wrestling with reflections on real life, making you want to rush out and re-see the film in question. On *The Mother and the Whore*: "It is long because people will talk themselves into silence over sex

and love, and the uncertain hope that they can be kept separate ... they catch youth at that tyrannical moment when it can believe it will never have to yield." Something that really irks some readers—or, at least, many fellow critics—is Thomson's perpetual mistrust of cinema as a genuine art. I actually consider this aspect of the work enjoyable and intriguing, especially when you catch onto the fact that it's the cinema's very slipperiness that so obviously seduces Thomson. "I came to a fork in the path and followed movies rather than Henry James," he confesses near the book's end—though, I suppose, such a reference book has no end—and we know exactly what he's getting at, a choice to simply adore literature, music and painting while aiming his critical faculties at a force more corrupted, more ghostly, more exploited, more mysterious, more collaborative, seemingly infinite and in all it accumulates from the world and spits back into it. If that last part sounds a little too abstract and sweeping, well, spend a few hours with *Have You Seen?* and you might just get swept up in the whirlwind yourself. ♥

All power to the prints!

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuwweekly.com

Ask most people what they think of when they hear the words "Black Panther Party," and a singular image will likely be the response: stern-looking Black men clad in leather jackets, berets askew on their heads, with guns—always guns—at the ready.

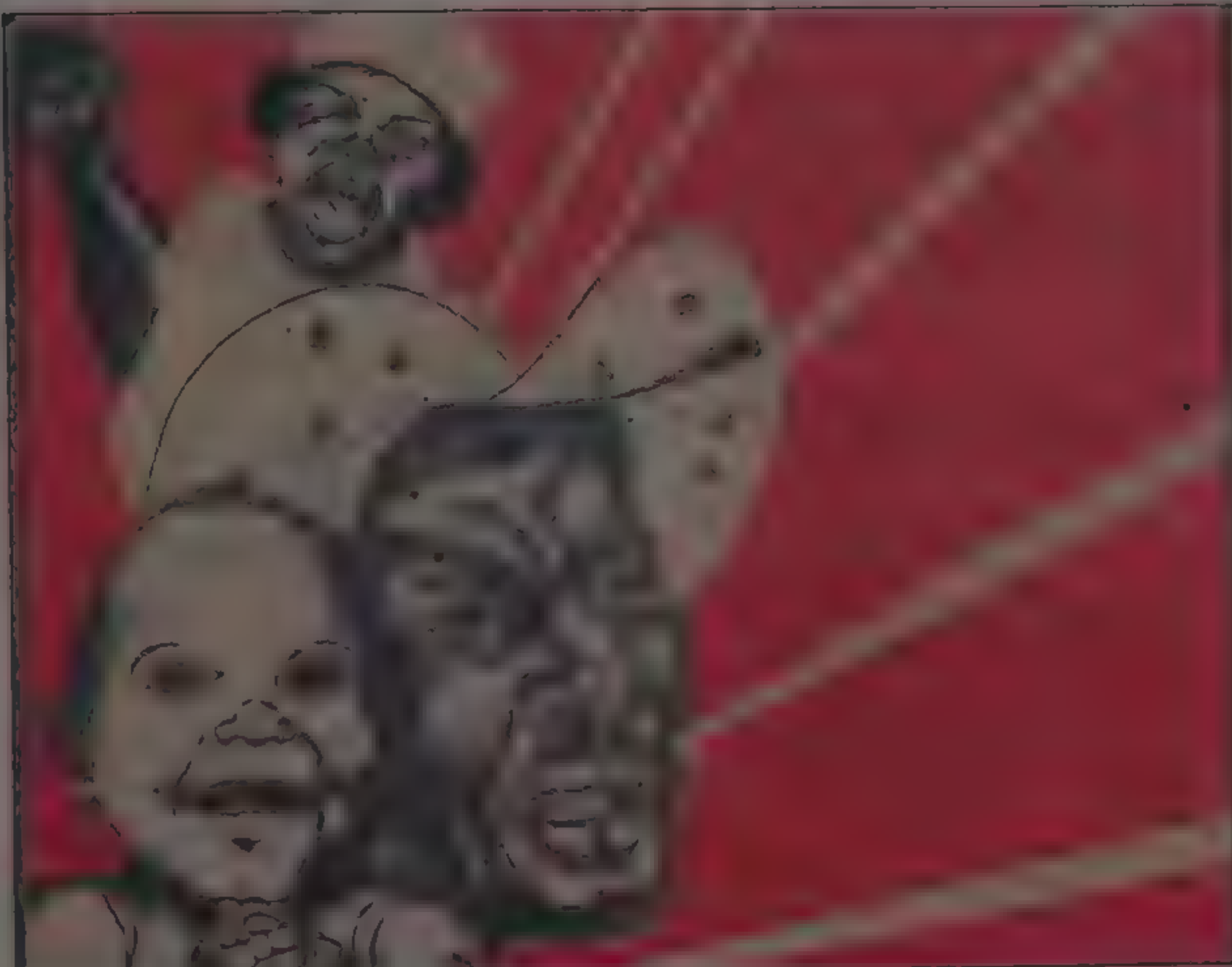
While it's an image which was often cultivated intentionally by the Panthers themselves, there was much more to the party which then-FBI director J. Edgar Hoover famously called "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country," including free breakfast programs for children, sickle cell anemia testing clinics, the distribution of free clothing and groceries and a range of other "survival programs" in impoverished African-American communities.

It is this more complex reality which is compellingly explored through the graphics produced by the Panthers during the party's heyday in SNAP gallery's current exhibit, *All Power to the People! Graphics of the Black Panther Party 1966 - 1974*.

The exhibit, featuring posters and covers of the party's weekly tabloid newspaper, *The Black Panther Black Community News Service*, reveals the importance the Panthers put on using visual arts to communicate with, inspire and organize a population where illiteracy brought about by a racist education system posed a considerable challenge.

Much of the exhibit—culled from a larger collection housed at the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Los Angeles—highlights the artistry of Emory Douglas, who served as the party's minister of culture from 1967 until 1979.

A talented graphic artist who was introduced to the trade as a teenager while working in a prison print shop during a 15-month stint in jail, Douglas developed a signature artistic



REVUE UNTIL SAT, NOV 29
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!
GRAPHICS OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY 1966 - 74
SNAP GALLERY (10309 - 97 ST)

style of bold colours and lines ideally suited for the offset press, often influenced by the style of revolutionary movements which were sweeping the globe at the time.

His art—which often incorporated layers of photos and collage—both reflected the socioeconomic issues faced by the community and portrayed African-Americans as powerful, proud and militant at a time when depictions in the mainstream media were most often demeaning and disempowering.

WHILE THE INCREDIBLE talents of Douglas and the other artists presented is reason enough to visit the exhibit, it is the way the pieces chronicle the politics, programs and struggle of the Pan-

thers that makes it such a fascinating record.

The collection clearly shows the central importance the survival programs played in the Panthers' politics, and the incredible impact they had on the community. The Panthers' understanding of the linkages to other struggles—including the war in Vietnam, the 1968 student uprising in Mexico, Latino and workers struggles in the US and support for the feminist movement and gay and lesbian rights—is also well represented.

The threat the Panthers were perceived as, and the length the authorities were willing to go to discredit and destroy the party, is revealed in declassified documents from the FBI's COINTELPRO program. And, sadly, the toll such efforts had on the party and its members is also chillingly depicted in the multiple pieces commemorating jailed, exiled or murdered Panthers, offering a timely reminder about the sacrifice that is often made in struggles for radical social change in the face of entrenched power. ♥

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Judith Thompson

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Everything is illuminated

A young Iraqi is a perfect metaphor in *Operation Filmmaker*

DAVID BERRY / david@vuweekly.com

It should have been a puff piece. After seeing an MTV feature on Muthana Mohmed, an Iraqi film student whose dreams were dashed by the destruction of the Iraq War, director Liev Schrieber invited him to intern on the set of his film *Everything is Illuminated*, which just happened to be about bridging cultural divides. Documentarian Nina Davenport tagged along for a feel-good short that might have made a nice DVD feature.

And then real life got in the way, which Davenport documents in *Operation Filmmaker*. Expecting to find a gracious young kid, eager to learn, the filmmakers were shocked that Muthana didn't quite see mixing vegan trail mix and fetching coffee as something worthy of his time. At the same time, given more responsibility—editing together a gag reel for the wrap party, for instance—Muthana spent his time partying and slacking off, eventually attempting to lie and beg his way into an extended visa and more money from his benefactors.

In short, it was a perfect metaphor for the Iraq War: culturally insensitive Americans watch their best-laid plans blow up in their face, all captured by Davenport's keen eye. As Davenport so eloquently puts it at the end of the film, though he started off looking for a happy ending, "now I'm just looking for an exit strategy."

Vue Weekly had a chance to talk with Davenport about her gruelling experience with Muthana from her home in New York.



COVER

FRI, NOV 7 (9 PM) OPERATION FILMMAKER

DIRECTED BY NINA DAVENPORT
FEATURING MUTHANA MOHAMED
METRO CINEMA (9928 - 101A AVE)
GLOBALVISIONSFESTIVAL.COM

★★★★

VUE WEEKLY: When was it that you first started to realize that there was more to this story than just a feel-good, charity angle?

NINA DAVENPORT: There already was some tension there between Muthana and the people who were helping him when I arrived. At first he tried to make everything seem like it was hunky-dory, but slowly this kind of resentment started to show through, and it was around the time they were trying to kill Americans right and left. It was at about the end of the first week that I started to realize it was the perfect metaphor for the war, because he wasn't getting along with his benefactors.

VW: And how were the filmmakers reacting to this? Were they expect-

ing any kind of tension, or did they come in with that kind of, "We're doing something nice, we'll be greeted as liberators" sort of attitude?

ND: I think so. I think that's one of the ways in which the metaphor works. And that point of view is kind of understandable, in a way. I remember I consoled myself about the war, even though I was against it, but that it wouldn't be good for us, but at least it would be good for them. Of course, that was just so wrong, even that point of view.

At the same time, you can't really condemn them: they were just trying to be nice, and they were trying to engage with this subject in a meaningful way rather than those of us just sitting back and watching it on TV. And I think you could also argue

that he should have been kind of grateful and he wasn't. There's always two different sides to every aspect of this story, at least, and I think that's why people like the film—it's not what we're used to seeing.

VW: One thing that recurs in the film is that Muthana keeps sort of getting second chances from third parties: at first everyone seems charmed, or perhaps inspired by him. Was that your initial experience?

ND: Yeah, I had the same experience: at first I found him really charming and funny, and I felt really bad for him that he was sort of being kind of judged by these colonialists, and partly I had no choice but to take his side, because he was the one letting me in. I think I just wanted to believe that he was anything but this great guy, but there was a gradual, slow erosion of faith in him.

VW: One of the things that Muthana brings up a lot, and obviously one of the keys to the metaphor, is that they don't understand him, or his culture. At the same time, though, there's definitely a sense that he's

just not a very good person, regardless of culture.

ND: A lot of it was his personality issues, and he would just hide behind, "These people don't understand me." One of Muthana's friends [who show up occasionally in the film thanks to cameras Davenport sent them to document the situation in Iraq while Muthana was away] actually came up on stage at TIFF and basically said, "One of them said, 'This is the Muthana I know.'" But there also was cultural misunderstanding: it's both, and that's what makes it interesting, that it works as a cultural metaphor and as a story of a guy who has interesting personality issues. You can't really parse out one from the other.

VW: As the film goes on, you become more prominent, first in giving him some advice, then actually giving him money to help with his visa situation, and then struggling with him over film rights and the like. Did you ever worry that you were violating the kind of objective distance that documentarians are supposed to maintain?

ND: I really didn't have any intention of putting myself in it at first, but basically he started asking me for advice, and it was hard to not give it, because I thought that I knew how these westerners think and he doesn't, and I could see him making bad choices and I wanted to sort of stop this horrible trainwreck.

That whole issue was a constant source of stress and confusion, and it became this constant moral questioning about what I was supposed to do. He was letting me film his life... and as much as I wanted to say no, in order to adhere to this idea of what you're supposed to do—not to mention the economic realities of documentary film—I was just unable: he was asking at fairly crucial junctures, and it seemed like he had a point when he said he deserved money.

VW: The whole experience certainly seemed to take its toll on you. Was there ever a point when you thought about walking away?

ND: I certainly fantasized about it all the time, especially after he got especially nightmarish to deal with. But the war analogy—it was the metaphor that keeps on giving. It was like, "Well, I've already put in this much of my time and energy, I have to keep on going." Nothing improved, but I just couldn't quit. ▽

This is a selection of what our reviewers felt were the best films of the Global Visions Film Fest. For reviews of all the films, visit vuweekly.com. For full details on the schedule and festival info, visit globalvisionsfestival.com.

Reviews by David Berry (DB), Bryan Birtles (BB), Paul Blinov (PB), Jonathan Busch (JB), Kristina De Guzman (KD), Mike Garth (MG), Omar Mouallem (OM), Bryan Saunders (BS)

BE LIKE OTHERS

SAT, NOV 8 (2 PM), PARAMOUNT THEATRE

★★★★

Last year when President Ahmadinejad claimed Iran didn't have "this phenomenon" of gays, many pointed out that because homosexuality is a capital crime in Iran, they generally hide. Nobody made mention that sex changes are legal, assuming that they are different topics. *Be Like Others* examines the interconnectedness of the two alternative lifestyles, and accomplishes it by only putting the lens on transsexuals. Several of the male-to-female subjects seem to have already conflated gender and sexuality, undergoing surgery for personal acceptance. The film does a tremendous job of profiling the complicated issues regarding human sexuality, law, religion and family, but there is one glaring void: it doesn't frame the perspective of female-to-male transsexuals. OM

THE BLOOD OF YINGZHOU DISTRICT

FRI, NOV 7 (9 PM), PARAMOUNT THEATRE

★★★★

At just four years-old, Gao Jun is an orphan, and he's HIV positive; he inherited the disease from his now-deceased mother and father, after they—like many others in the region—sold units of their blood plasma in exchange for 53 yuan, and were infected with HIV as a result. Fearing that they might catch the deadly virus just through casual contact with Gao Jun, the uneducated villagers refuse to come near the child. His only remaining relatives are thus torn between taking him in—and being ostracized as a result—or leaving him on his own, possibly to die. While it tackles some serious subject matter, this documentary is enlightening, sincere and genuinely touching, though just a bit too preachy near the end. BS

CLUB NERVE

SAT, NOV 8 (2 PM), MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE

★★★★

Through the stories of four women, director Tracey Deer examines the racism that surrounds her community on the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawake. In layman's terms, she explains how the arbitrariness of the Indian Act has influenced an equally arbitrary process of reserve membership granted by a Council of Elders. Such rules have caused division between Aboriginals and a clouded sense of identity for those who aren't considered "100 per cent native." It makes one wonder if culture, regardless of bloodline or physical appearances, means anything at all. KD

GLOBAL VISIONS FILM FEST

EXTENDED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

LA CORONA (THE CROWN)

Sat, Nov 8 (9 pm), Paramount Theatre

★★★★

Beauty pageants rival soccer games for popularity in Columbia, which might explain why one of their female prisons decided to hold one. Following the preparations and competitions of four contestants, *La Corona* (The Crown), is a refreshingly humanistic look at both prisoners and beauty pageant contestants. The film does an admirable job both of exploring the conditions that lead these women to lives of crime, and the almost petty issues that, in their trivial importance, elevate the women and their cellmates out of prison life while they compete for the crown. The best part, though, is how directors Isabel Vega and Amanda Micheli draw connections between the drive for the crown and the longing for redemption all these troubled women have. DB

DINNER WITH THE PRESIDENT: A NATION'S JOURNEY

Sat, Nov 8 (7 pm), Metro Cinema

★★★★

If you had dinner with Pakistan's then-president Pervez Musharraf, would you really break the ice with, "What is your vision for democracy in Pakistan?" Sabiha Sumar did. She's a fearless documentary journalist who loves to aggravate conservative chauvinists with demands for gender equality. She's a lot tamer when Musharraf and his mother come over for dinner (and then agrees to meet with her twice more between 2005 and 2007), but she's honest and sincere in her concerns for her nation. The dinner is brilliantly edited to weave in and out of interviews with poor, rich, fundamentalist and secular Pakistanis—all unsure about this thing called "democracy." OM

THE ENGLISH SURGEON

Sat, Nov 8 (7 pm), Paramount Theatre

★★★★

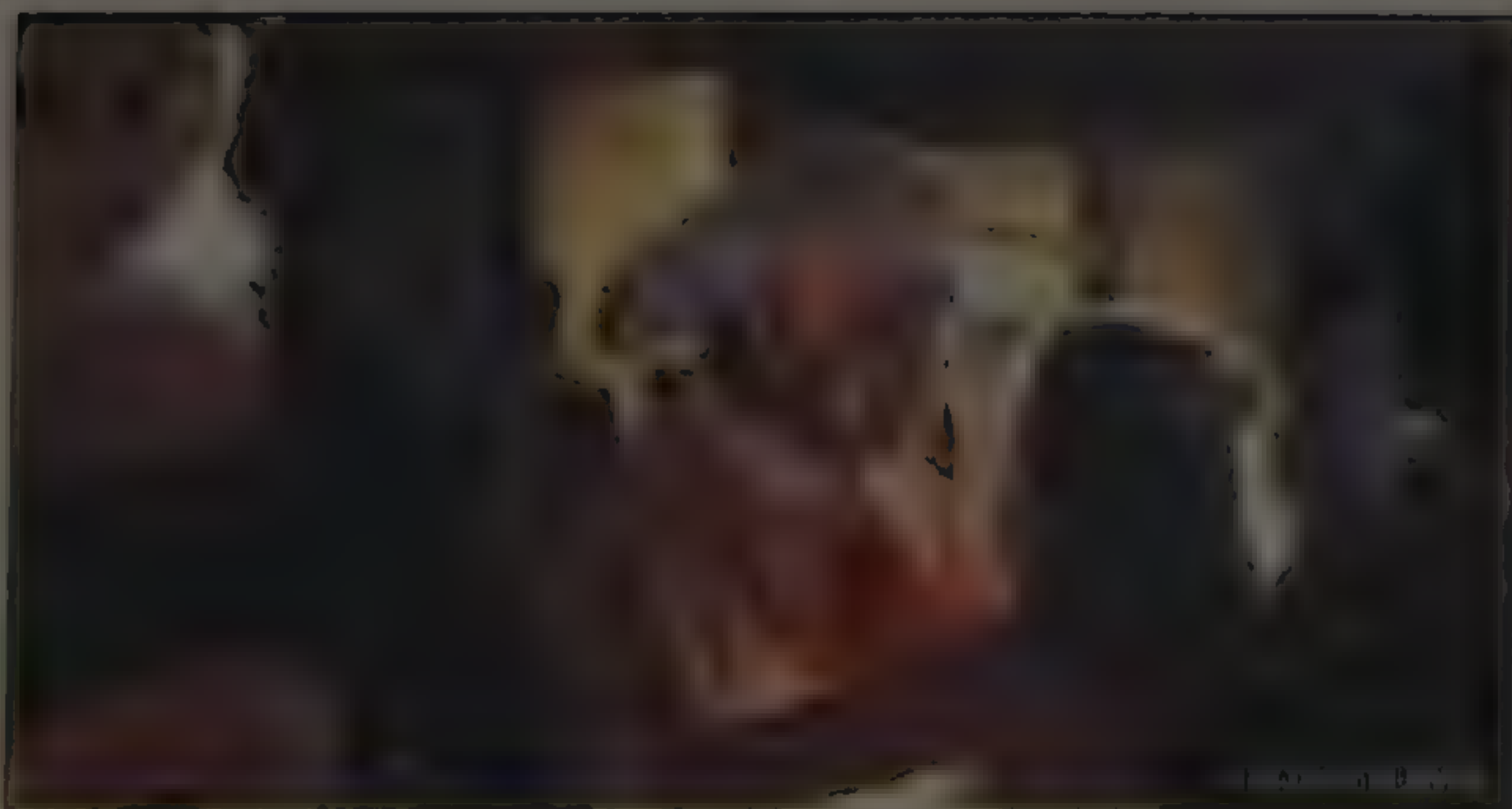
For the past 15 years, Dr Henry Marsh has traveled to Kiev, Ukraine, to perform difficult brain surgeries under ridiculously impoverished situations, and *The English Surgeon* follows one such trip, giving a fascinating look at the country's woefully inadequate medical system and his attempts to give the poor and sick some affordable hope. Watching Marsh hunt for powertools to perform surgery with at a flea-market underscores the point on Ukraine's medical system with tragic authority, and even the most iron-stomached may squirm through the climax: the real surgical removal of a brain tumour where the patient must remain conscious for the entire operation. PB

FOOTBALL UNDER COVER

Sat, Nov 8 (7 pm), Milner Library Theatre

★★★★

By simply turning the camera on and shooting, Iranian and German directors Ayat Najafi and David Assmann capture the inevitable culture clash of a German women's soccer team vs an Iranian women's soccer team, set to play in Asia's largest soccer stadium. There's plenty of natural conflict that goes far beyond who will be the victor. There are cultural misconceptions on both sides, wardrobe mal-



functions, concerns of war and custom-related obstacles. One fault of the film-making duo, however, is not documenting the emotional importance of this game to these young women. OM

FREEHELD

Sun, Nov 9 (4 pm), Milner Library Theatre

★★★★★

In a sharp and courageous effort to address the current state of equal rights for same-sex couples in the US, Cynthia Wade pares down to essential facts to effectively make an argument. New Jersey police officer Laurel Hester, diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, is refused to leave her pension to her domestic partner due to the ruling by the county Freeholders. *Freeheld* portrays the exceptional and overwhelming support of the Ocean County community to persuade five men to grant the couple their wish, concisely moving between the lively public debates to Laurel's private life before her passing. Obviously, the Academy Award winning piece is a tear-jerker, but also reminds the viewer that such tears are shed in their ability to inspire a significant righteous change. Not a dry eye in the house. JB

HUNGU

Sun, Nov 9 (12 pm), Metro Cinema

★★★★

A simple white background is the setting for this animated short featuring human figures inspired by African rock paintings and marked with impressive subtlety and detail in the shading. The story turns around a mother and her son, combining themes of love, family, death, reincarnation, time and survival into a brief, moving portrait. The film's heart is wrenching at first and soothing later as mother and son are separated and then reunited in another life, with a soundtrack played on the hungu, a stringed African instrument. EM

MY COUNTRY, MY COUNTRY

Sat, Nov 8 (5 pm), Metro Cinema

★★★★★

Against the backdrop of the approaching Iraqi election of 2005, we follow one man named Dr Riyadh, who is strongly opposed to the American occupation. Due to his profession, he is able to see firsthand how the constant violence and chaos has weakened the health of his patients, both physically and mentally. Determined to bring about change and democracy in Iraq, he decides to become a running candidate of the Iraqi Islamic Party against his family's wishes. Dr Riyadh is instantly likable and his convictions and love for his country are truly inspiring. The moments of minor squabbles with his family provide rare glimpses of the Iraqi people that are

both amusing and endearing, moments met with immense sadness when the reality of their country's situation comes back into play. KO

THE ORDER OF MYTHS

Sat, Nov 8 (8 pm), Paramount Theatre

★★★★

In 1703, Mobile, Alabama was the site of the first Mardi Gras in America. Two centuries later, celebrations in Mobile remain highly segregated along racial lines, with the all-white Mobile Carnival Association and the all-black Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association organizing separate events. Through weeks following the dual preparations and a dizzying stretch of celebrations, director Margaret Brown takes us inside a Byzantine world of tradition, ritualized balls and mystic societies, creating a fascinating, character-driven exploration of race, class, power and history in the US Deep South. To her credit, Brown avoids editorializing, allowing the complexities to unfold through the voices of generations of participants on both sides of the divide. DB



THE RECRUITER

Fri, Nov 8 (4 pm), Paramount Theatre

★★★★★

Taking a look at arguably the US Army's most important frontline, Edet Belzberg's brilliant, voyeuristic documentary follows Sgt Clay Usie, one of the Army's top recruiters, as he attempts to enlist teens in his Louisiana hometown. Usie is part salesman and part cult leader, slick answers at the ready when concerned parents come calling, but stressing brotherhood, family and duty to his raw recruits. Perhaps the best part of the doc, though, is Belzberg's treatment of the teens who sign up: she doesn't shy away from the fact that, for some of them, the Army really is giving them self-esteem, acceptance and an opportunity they otherwise wouldn't have. That these young men and women need to go into a war

zone to do that says more about American society than any of her subjects could. DB

RECYCLED LIFE

Sat, Nov 8 (2 pm), Paramount Theatre

★★★★

Filmed over the course of four years in Guatemala, *Recycled Life* reveals a fascinating glimpse into the hardships endured by hundreds of families residing in and around Central America's largest landfill. Striking footage and live shots portray a community whose survival depends on the salvage of recyclable materials from the site. The members of this community—some barely ten years old—are likable, hard-working folk, neglected by society and their government; one woman refers to the scenario as a reflection of Guatemala's inaction towards its poor, and their subsequent endurance. The vividness of *Recycled Life* speaks to this endurance amidst the region's continuous state of development. MG

STRANDED: I'VE COME FROM A PLANE THAT CRASHED ON THE MOUNTAINS

Sun, Nov 9, (7 pm), Metro Cinema

★★★★

A 1972 plane crash in the Andes and the following survival of 16 members of a Uruguayan rugby team over 72 days is as gripping, if not even moreso, than the well-known book *Alive* by Piers Paul Read and its film adaptation. The actual survivors of the incident share their experience with every detail told from their mouths, from the initial panic once the plane hit the ground to eventually having to eat human flesh as the last remaining source of food (which also included cologne and Elizabeth Arden cosmetics, which were also eaten). The dramatizations between the interviews are a little,

prescription, the indescribable final moments and even the aftermath of the process with family and friends. It's a melancholic documentary, but one that serves to remind us of the goodness of life, even as a few choose to make their final exits. PB

THE SWEETEST EMBRACE: RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

Fri, Nov 7 (7 pm), Metro Cinema

★★★★

It's easy to feel exhausted after watching the gruelling journey that two Canadians named Soorgul and Amir make back to their homeland of Afghanistan, which they were driven out of 16 years prior during the Soviet occupation. Afghanistan is portrayed in both a harsh and beautiful light as constant news reports of violent attacks are heard amidst the beautiful landscapes that have not yet been completely ruined. While Soorgul and Amir are both very driven in reuniting with their families, the film often catches them at moments of vulnerability. The Sweetest Embrace is not only a journey to be once again wrapped in the arms of one's mother but to be also wrapped in the arms of an entire community. OM

TO SEE IF I'M SMILING

Sun, Nov 9 (4 pm), Metro Cinema

★★★★

To See if I'm Smiling collects the grim reflections of six women conscripted into the army of Israel, the only country in the world to have a mandatory two-year army service for women. Interwoven with both candid interviews and war footage, they speak frankly on corruption within the army, and the violence they experienced from the outside as soldiers. Naturally, gender issues arise during their service time, but the crux of *To See if I'm Smiling* is how the corruption and horrors that these women witnessed—or took part in themselves—continue to burden their psyches. Unsettling. PB

TRIAGE

Thu, Nov 6 (8 pm), Paramount Theatre

OPENING NIGHT KALA

★★★★

As a member of Medecins Sans Frontiers Dr James Orbinski was present in Rwanda during the humanitarian crises of the early 1990s. He was on the frontlines during the Rwandan genocide and also had to deal with continuing food shortages in the country as he attempted to treat disease and deal with the horrific effects of violence. *Triage* follows Orbinski as he returns to Rwanda for the first time in 15 years, speaking with former colleagues, patients and others that he interacted with during his time there, as well as connecting with government officials and medical students and passing along lessons he has learned throughout his life. The film, and Orbinski himself, tries to deal with the choices that were made at the time—choices that led to life for some and death for others. Orbinski also tries to define humanitarian work in the face of government pressure to politicize the definition and take it out of the realm of political neutrality. A hard film to watch at times, it is another encouraging sign that the world is willing to discuss what happened in Rwanda, even if that discussion comes almost two decades too late. BB ♥

Election blues

FLICKS

DVDETECTIVE

JOSEF BRAUN & BRIAN GIBSON
dvdetective@vuwweekly.com

In honour of the recently passed American election—deadline dictates that I actually have to write this before the results are in, but suffice to say I'll be both shocked and more than a little disheartened if Barack Obama isn't the president as you read this—I thought I'd look at two films that deal fairly explicitly with the political climate America is slowly, mercifully abandoning. (Bush is, of course, its personification, but it would be reductive and naïve to call him its alpha or omega.) That's particularly true when you consider Jay Roach's *Recount*, which was first aired on HBO and released on DVD in late August. A retelling of the

protracted, bitter 2000 battle over Florida—it's tagline is "The future of the nation was hanging by a chad," which is succinct enough, if also sure to provoke chills up the spine of anyone who remembers the ceaseless chatter about chads, butterfly ballots and hand recounts—it makes a solid case that divisive partisan bickering was already flourishing before Bush took over, and that he and his cronies were just some of the most adept at manipulating it. Taking a trench-level view, *Recount* follows the two teams of lawyers and strategists as they each attempt to finagle their way into taking Florida's crucial 27 electoral votes. At the centre of it all is Ron Klain (Kevin Spacey), a Gore staffer whose reservations about the candidate—he was treated rather unceremoniously by a man with whom he worked for the better part of eight years—are outweighed by an earnest desire to see all the votes properly counted, and more than a little bit of a win-at-all-costs

mentality. Of course, his streetfighters' tendencies are dwarfed by the Republican team, lead by James Baker (Tom Wilkinson), who share none of the Democrats early compunction about fighting as dirty as it's going to take (a philosophy that would come to full fruition over the next eight years, of course). And despite the all-around solid performances—Spacey seems at home in his downtrodden-man-playing-for-high-stakes role, and the supporting cast is filled out quite nicely for a TV movie, particularly Laura Dern as Palin-esque (before it was even an adjective) automaton Katherine Harris—and screenwriter Danny Strong's impressive feat of turning byzantine constitutional law arguments into engaging backroom drama, it's the arguments about tactics and what America should be the prove that really prove the most interesting. Though everything is obviously dramatized, Strong did some extensive legwork on the script, interviewing nearly every one of the principals (save Harris, actually) to get the full story, and it's fascinating—it might have even been comforting, if they hadn't all given up to partisan rancour to some degree

in the end—to know that the people sifting through this mess had reservations about their hand in openly turning the democratic process into a bitter shitfight. IT'S SOME MEASURE of Bush's monumental failings as a president, though, that the fact he arguably stole an election isn't even the worst you can say about him. That would be that he got America into a protracted, realistically unwinnable war that may help torpedo its (and, as a result, perhaps the world's) economy. Of course, economic costs always pale in comparison to human ones when it comes to warfare, and the documentary *Body of War* aims to explore just those. Out on fairly basic DVD this week, but also showing as part of the Global Visions Film Festival (7 pm, November 7 at the Paramount), Phil Donahue and Ellen Spiro's documentary follows the life of Tomas Young, a young soldier who signed up for the army in the days after 9/11 with the intention of fighting in Afghanistan, only to be paralyzed by a bullet to the spine within the first five days of his boots hitting the ground in Iraq.

Body of War is at its best while it follows Young's quotidian struggle, painfully and frankly taking us through the exhaustion, pain and casual helplessness of a man paralyzed from the chest down. Donahue and Spiro seem to pay particular attention to Young's penis, which brings everything into pretty sharp focus: hearing about the Sisyphean struggle that is trying to have sex is a refreshingly down-to-earth take on disability, and a scene that has Young's mother inserting a catheter while their minivan sits in a parking lot is both wrenching and strangely endearing. *Body of War's* main problem, though, is that it does little to convince anyone exactly why the war was bad. Maybe that's a moot point for a large portion of society, but the complete ignorance of a differing viewpoint makes it too easy to pass this off as partisan propaganda. It's true that you'd have to be some kind of insensitive to cast aside such obvious pain as a political trick, but if there's anything we should learn from the last eight years, it's that some people will do anything to keep the world neatly conformed to their beliefs. ♥

Seth Rogen Elizabeth Banks

"ZACK AND MIRI IS HYSTERICAL! LET THE LAUGHS BEGIN!"

Seth Rogen and Elizabeth Banks are both terrific and bring out the sweet and spicy best in each other. They rock it!"

—PETER TRAVERS



ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORNO

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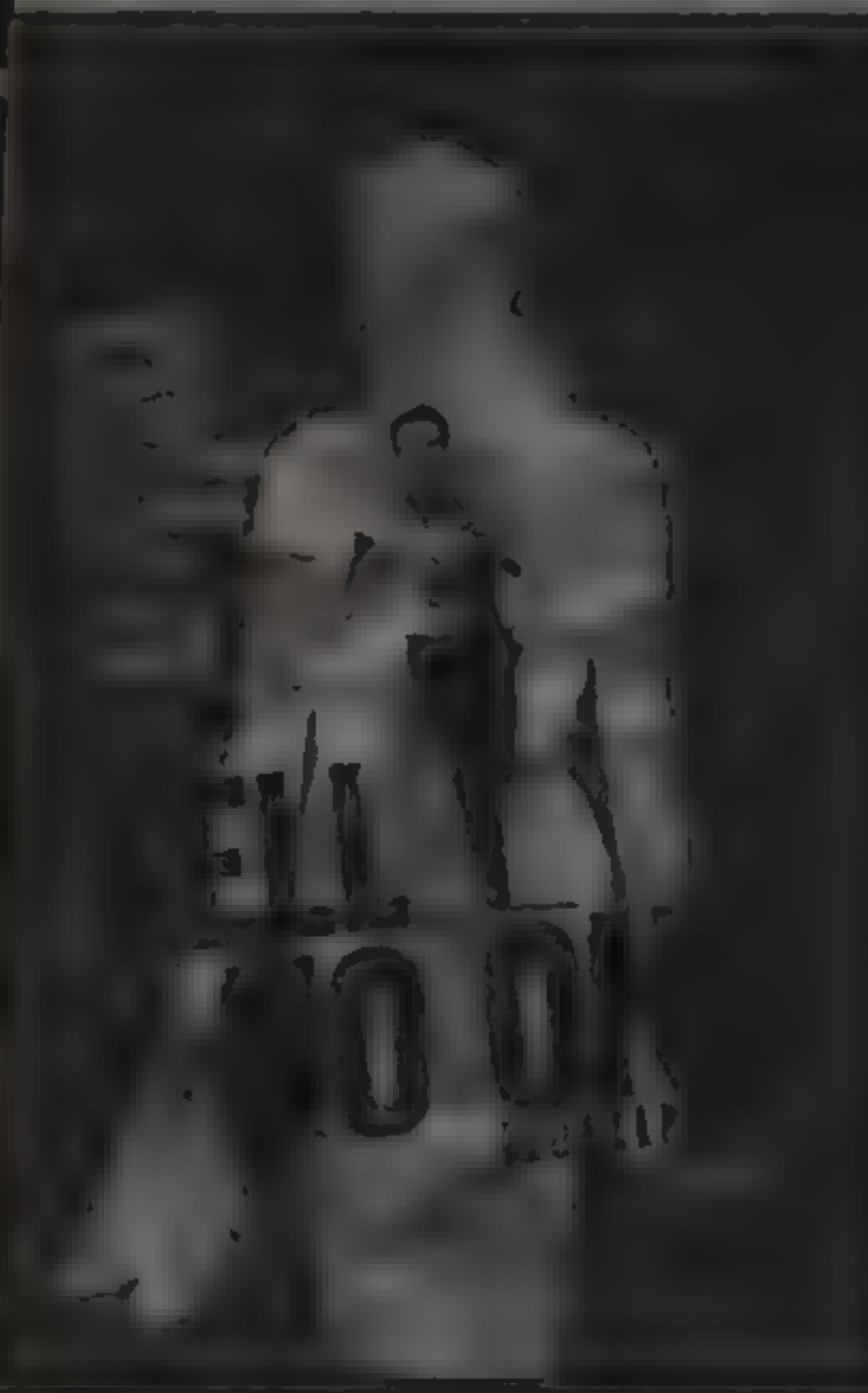
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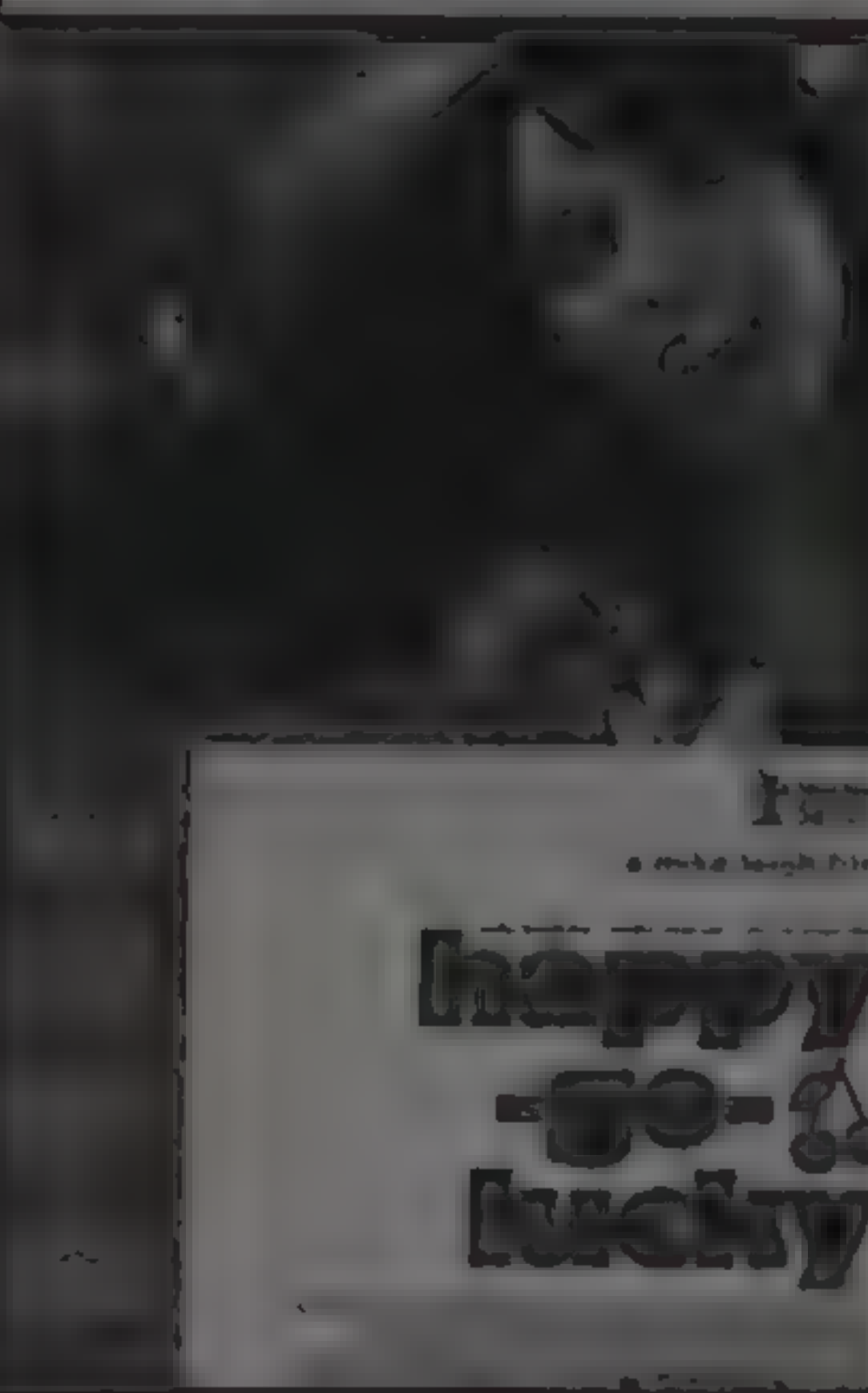


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GLOBAL VISIONS FILM FESTIVAL

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THE SWEETEST EMBRACE: RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

MY COUNTRY, MY COUNTRY

TAKING ROOT: THE VISION OF WANGARI MAATHAI

DADDY TRAN: A LIFE IN 3-D

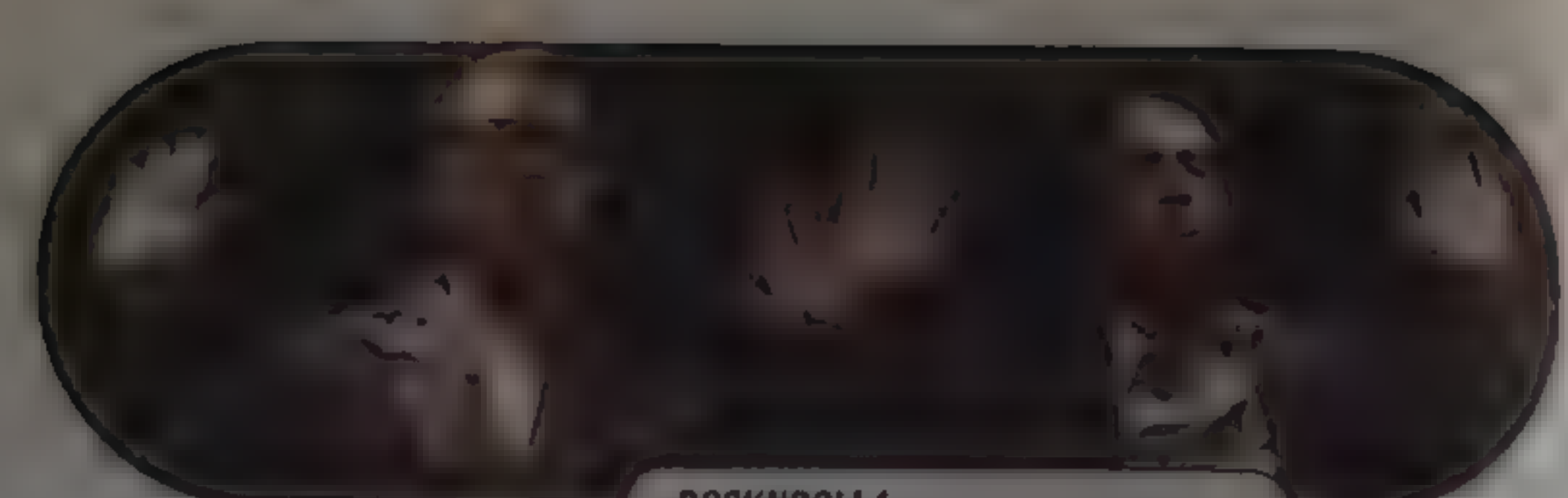
MY BROTHER

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CHANGELING

NOW PLAYING

CHANGELING
DIRECTED BY CLINT EASTWOOD
WRITTEN BY J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI
STARRING ANGELINA JOLIE, JOHN MALKOVICH
★★★

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuwweekly.com
Single mother Christine Collins comes home from work one day in the spring of 1931 to find her little boy Walter van-

ished. The ensuing search yields nothing, exacerbating a trend of bad PR for the LAPD. Months later a boy abandoned in an Indiana truck stop is identified as Walter. He's scrubbed up and rushed back to Los Angeles and the arms of his long-suffering mother. But once the boy exits the train, as the press snaps the celebratory photos, Christine tells Captain Jones, head of LAPD's juvenile unit, that they found the wrong boy. Jones insists she take a second look, maybe the boy's changed; maybe, he implies, Christine's not quite right in the head, after so much worry and dread. Christine takes the little intruder home, is no more convinced than before, but LAPD, it seems, will have none of it. Case closed.

The set-up, verging on the surreal, is wonderfully mysterious, yet something seems off. The misleadingly titled *Changeling* begins with Christine promising to follow a distinguished line of memorable movie characters—Simone Simon in *Cat People*, Mia Farrow in *Rosemary's Baby*, Nicole Kidman in *Birth*, the entire cast of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*—immersed in some tale of deep unease where no one listens and the condescending patriarchy bear down, supported by our readiness to dismiss yet another hysterical woman. But this story, scripted by TV veteran J Michael Straczynski, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring that famed mother of five (and counting) Angelina Jolie, has another agenda, one that will render Christine far less intriguing and far more akin to Erik Brokovich than the heroine of any brooding tale of paranoia. It's disappointing, but what can you do? It's a true story.

So railroaded Christine becomes a cru-

sader, and, while Jolie looks marvelous in a cloche, character development consequently evaporates. The bad guys are really bad and the good guys really good, which is pretty hard to swallow when you've got one supremely pissed off John Malkovich playing the religious radio personality who wrangles Christine into his flamboyant campaign to bring down LAPD. The history here is fascinating stuff—a demented Canadian killer, fiendish mental institutions, death by hanging, telephone operators on roller skates—but how to manage it all, how to bring out the movie in it? Straczynski never found a focal point, and Eastwood it seems never saw the meatier possibilities behind the script's highly sellable mix of sordidness and triumph, *Chinatown* with a happy ending. *Changeling's* uneven, always interesting, and terribly long. Some of the child performances are unspeakably bad. The adults have only one note to play. It might have been much more, or, better yet, something completely different. Clint, 78 and on fire these days, is too busy to care much, I guess. Trailers for his next movie are already circulating.



THE HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY

THE HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY
DIRECTED BY MICKEY LIDDELL
WRITTEN BY JOHN TRAVIS, REBECCA SONNENSHINE
STARRING HALEY BENNETT, CHACE CRAWFORD
★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuwweekly.com
Finally, something we can all agree upon. With the conflicted opinions of candidates running for the US and past Canada election, not to mention the difficult task of deciding whether to see *W* or *High School Musical 3*, film review amalgamator site rottentomatoes.com reports that zero per cent of its collected reviews approved *The Haunting of*

GARNEAU
theatre
8712 - 109 Street - 433-0728



RACHEL GETTING MARRIED
MONDAY - 8:30 PM
SAT. SUN. & TUESDAY LATE - 10:30 PM
RATED 14+ LANGUAGE: FRENCH, ENGLISH, SPANISH

2BITS
November 20
NOV 29 7-10PM
MOVIES IN THE STREETS

1 DAY FILM SCHOOL
NOV 15TH 11AM-6PM
\$75/ members - \$85/ non-members

FAVA
FILM & VIDEO ARTS SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
FAVA.CA

Molly Hartley, a film lucky enough to have been plucked for the Halloween movieplex due to dreamy co-star Chace Crawford (*Gossip Girl*). By all means, the movie in This movie sucks.

An only child of a hard-working father and institutionalized schizophrenic mother, Molly Hartley (Haley Bennett) is reluctantly enrolled in a private school only to begin a series of nose bleeds and hallucinations prompting suspicions she is either crazy or cursed. Few of her fellow students lend themselves to Molly, including Evangelical Christian Alexis (Shanna Collins), spunky ripped-tights-and-black-eyeliner Leah (Shannon Marie Woodward) and most-popular-boy-in-school Joseph (Crawford). Each of them respond very little to the scar above Molly's chest, from when her mother once tried to stab (and kill) her as a way to supposedly stop occult forces from taking her away on her 18th birthday.

Molly's biggest concern is not the dark lord, but that these hallucinations suggest she will end up with the same mental illness of her mother. But of course, the institution that holds her mother is right outside of town, still bent on icing her daughter to prevent Satan or whichever dark lord from claiming her soul. All the while, some of the girls at school are being really mean to her.

It's hard to tell what's up with *Molly Hartley*, whether its the poor research and representation of the occult, a whiney heroine, or merely that its PG-13 and intended for pre-teens too cool for trick-or-treating. Either way, kids must have thought twice about giving up treat-size Kit-Kats for what's a dramatically mundane first draft of a narrative not a far cry from an RL Stine novel. The occasion of Halloween seems compelled to release a handful of horror films, and in a perfect world, the production funds of these films would be spent on the remastering and re-release of *Sleepaway Camp* or *Fright Night*. Besides, when news reports of the terrors of Greyhound buses and online dating out-scare the scariest audiences, maybe we ought to lock ourselves in at home with a book and a can of bear spray.

ROCKNROLLA
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY GUY RITCHIE
STARRING GERARD BUTLER, TOM WILKINSON
★

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuweekly.com
Rocka Rolla is the name of Judas Priest's first album, released back in '74, produced by the same guy who did the first three Sabbaths and the debut for Budgie. The driving title track—a romance narrative, featuring the encouraging refrain of "You can take her if you want her / If you think you can!"—has solid crank, a pleasingly inane octave switch in the guitar solo and wilted harmonica accents that accentuate the overall sense of ambitious young lads still testing out various aural accoutrements to see whether they fortify the metal hammer. I mention *Rocka Rolla* here only because, while a modest work to be sure, it is so much better than *RocknRolla*, the new Guy Ritchie movie with the strikingly similar yet, however implausibly, even stupider title.

Ritchie's been working out his sub-Tarantino kooky crime shtick for a while now—it's been a full decade since *Lock*,

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

FILM WEEKLY

FRI NOV 7 - THU NOV 12, 2008

ALL showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre to confirm

CHABA THEATRE-JASPER

0094 Connaught Dr. Jasper, 780-852-4749

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (PG)

Fri & Sat 7:00, 9:10; Sun-Thu 8:00 only

PRIDE AND GLORY (14A violence and coarse language, not recommended for young children)

Fri & Sat 7:00 & 9:10; Sun-Thu 8:00

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12

2400 Hwy 101, 780-412-8729

RELIGIOUS (14A coarse language, mature themes)

Fri-Sat 1:25, 4:00, 6:50, 9:15, 11:30; Sun-Thu 1:25, 4:00, 6:50, 9:15

IGOR (PG)

Fri-Thu 1:50, 4:05, 6:45, 9:10

LAKEVIEW TERRACE (14A coarse language)

Fri-Sat 1:45, 4:25, 7:20, 9:55, 12:15; Sun-Thu 1:45, 4:25, 7:20, 9:55

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL (18A coarse language, crude content)

Fri-Sat 6:55, 9:20, 11:25; Sun-Thu 6:55, 9:20

GHOST TOWN (PG coarse language)

Fri-Sat 1:55, 4:25, 7:25, 9:50, 12:10; Sun-Thu 1:55, 4:25, 7:25, 9:50

DEATH RACE (14A gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence)

Fri-Sat 4:45, 10:00, 12:20; Sun-Thu 4:45, 7:00

THE HOUSE BUNNY (PG coarse language, not rec. for young children)

Fri-Sat 7:35, 10:05, 12:05; Sun-Thu 7:35, 9:55

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS (PG)

Fri-Thu 1:20, 4:10

TROPIC THUNDER (14A coarse language, crude content)

Fri-Sat 1:45, 4:35, 7:10, 9:45, 12:05; Sun-Thu 1:45, 4:35, 7:10, 9:45

STEP BROTHERS (14A coarse language, not recommended for children, crude content)

Fri-Sat 1:35, 4:40, 7:15, 9:40, 12:00; Sun-Thu 1:35, 4:40, 7:15, 9:40

THE DARK KNIGHT (PG violence, frightening scenes, not rec. for young children)

Fri-Sat 1:10, 4:20, 7:40, 11:20; Sun-Thu 1:10, 4:20, 7:40

MAMMA MIA! (PG)

Fri-Sat 1:40, 4:15, 7:05, 9:35, 11:55; Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:15, 7:05, 9:35

HANCOCK (PG crude content, violence, coarse language)

Fri-Thu 2:00, 7:35

WALL-E (G)

Fri-Sat 1:30, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25, 11:40; Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25

KUNG FU PANDA (PG)

Fri-Thu 2:05, 4:50

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

1000 17th Avenue, 780-333-3333

MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA (G)

no passes

Fri-Thu 12:15, 1:00, 2:40, 3:40, 5:30, 6:10, 7:50, 8:30, 10:15

MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA (G)

no passes

Fri-Thu 1:50, 4:20, 7:00, 9:20

ROLE MODELS (14A coarse language, crude content) no passes

Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:30, 2:50, 5:15, 7:45, 10:25; Tue 5:15, 7:45, 10:25; STAR & STROLLERS SCREENING, no passes

Tue 1:00

ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORN (18A crude content, sexual content, coarse language)

Fri-Thu 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30

PRIDE AND GLORY (14A coarse language, violence, not recommended for children)

Fri-Thu 1:00

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3: SENIOR YEAR (G) no passes

Fri-Thu 12:00, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:20

SAW V (18A gory scenes, disturbing content)

Fri-Thu 1:45, 4:30, 7:45, 10:30

CHANGELING (14A)

Fri-Thu 1:30, 4:00, 7:00, 9:10

PASSCHENDAELE (14A gory scenes, coarse language)

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ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORN (18A crude content, sexual content, coarse language, crude content)

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THE METROPOLITAN OPERA: DOCTOR ATOMIC

Sat 11:00

QUANTUM OF SOLACE (14A) no passes

Thu 12:05

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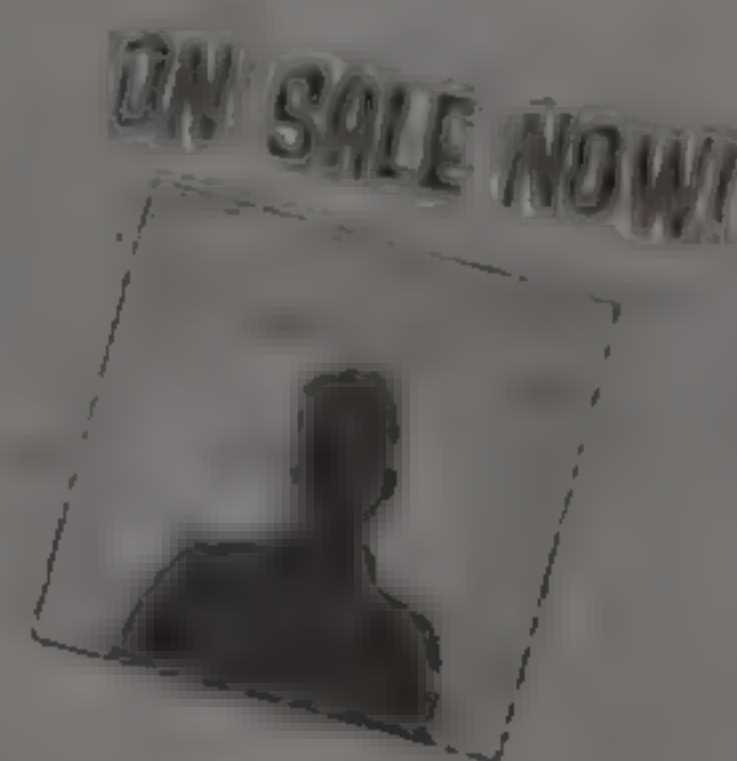
FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 06, 2008

1. Michael Franti & Spearhead – All Rebel Rockers (anti)
2. Kings Of Leon – Only By The Night (rca)
3. Chad Vangaalen – Soft Airplane (flemish eye)
4. TV On The Radio – Dear Science (touch & go)
5. Rodney Crowell – Sex & Gasoline (stony plain)
6. Calxico – Carried To Dust (quarter stick)
7. Jenny Lewis – Acid Tongue (warner)
8. Ry Cooder – I, Flathead (nonesuch)
9. Okkervil River – The Stand Ins (jagjaguar)
10. Hank 3 – Damn Right, Rebel Proud (sidewalk)
11. Taj Mahal – Maestro (heads up)
12. Old Crow Medicine Show – Tennessee Pusher (netwerk)
13. Maria Dunn – The Piddler (distant witness)
14. Ray La Montagne – Gossip In The Grain (sony/bmg)
15. Fleet Foxes – S/T (sub pop)
16. Amos Garrett – Get Way Back (stony plain)
17. Fucked Up – The Chemistry Of Common Life (matador)
18. Jackson Browne – Time The Conqueror (inside)
19. Wendy McNeill – A Dreamer's Guide To Hardcore Living (six shooter)
20. Dar Williams – Promised Land (razor & tie)
21. Ndidi Onukwulu – The Contradictor (jericho beach)
22. Dennis Wilson – Pacific Ocean Blue (epic)
23. Holly Golightly & The Broke Offs – Dirt Don't Hurt (transdreamer)
24. Alejandro Escovedo – Real Animal (back porch)
25. Elliott Brood – Mountain Meadows (six shooter)
26. Brian Wilson – That Lucky Old Sun (capitol)
27. Jay Reatard – Matador Singles '08 (matador)
28. Agnostic Mountain Gospel Choir – Ten Thousand (shoutin' abner pim)
29. Emmylou Harris – All I Intended To Be (nonesuch)
30. Joan Osborne – Little Wild One (plum records)

SEBASTIEN GRAINGER & THE MOUNTAINS

S/T (SADDLE CREEK)

Better known as singer and drummer for dance-punk duo Death From Above 1979, Grainger will soon be better known as a singer/songwriter of juke box worthy arrangements. He scales the genres of Rock, Folk and dancey pop anthems with unbeatable talent.



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Family's not a word

Rachel Getting Married captures the milieu of family falling apart

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vancouverweekly.com

Right off, the timing seems precarious: on the cusp of her big sister's wedding day, Kym (Anne Hathaway) is picked up from rehab, chain smoking, nervously catty, clearly feeling jinxed by the pressure not to fuck everything up. Emma (Anisa George), the maid of honour, keeps telling Kym that it's not all about her, and you soon want to swat Emma and tell her it's not all about brownie points with the bride, either.

But Kym is self-absorbed, by nature of the 12-step recovery process if not also simply by nature, and the speech she improvises at the rehearsal dinner keeps swerving so uneasily into colossal public embarrassment without quite tipping over as to be a kind of feat of suspense. The feeling here of being almost out of control is beautifully controlled by Hathaway, director Jonathan Demme, cinematographer Declan Quinn, with his stability-crashing handheld camera, and everyone else in the room, sitting there trying not to let the panic show. It's a brilliantly measured early set piece and a sort of emotional weather report on what's to come.

So we've got two sisters, the crazy one and the titular, reasonable one (Rosemarie DeWitt), who's getting married and getting a PhD in psychology, and is leery of being upstaged for the umpteenth time. We've got two divorced parents, the outgoing, worrying, slightly manic but clearly loving father (Bill Irwin) and the quietly radiant but finally remote mother (Deborah Winger), the former chomping at the bit to welcome Kym home and make nice with everyone, the latter amiable but comfortably outside of the proceedings. And we've got an absent family member, too, a third sibling long dead yet seemingly lingering everywhere they turn—the wedding is to be held in the family house.

For everything to be truly resolved by the end of *Rachel Getting Married*, Hathaway would have to no longer be the star, and Winger would have to let go of more backed-up vitriol than the movie's compact timeline and fearsome integrity could probably bear. But tidy resolutions are



DRAMA

OPENS FRI, NOV 7
RACHEL GETTING MARRIED
WRITTEN BY JONATHAN DEMME
DIRECTED BY JONATHAN DEMME
STARRING ANNE HATHAWAY, ROSEMARIE DEWITT, BILL IRWIN
★★★★★

antithetical to *Rachel Getting Married*. As written by Jenny Lumet, the abundant humour and familiar narrative devices—I use that adjective in both senses—get us settled into our seats, but the sensitively observed details that bring this story rushing to unruly life are anything but settling.

HATHAWAY'S KYM seems resentful above all of her own neediness, her large, dark eyes holding an inner turmoil that's trying to keep up appearances under scrutiny. DeWitt's Rachel is at once lovely and righteous and eager to descend from her typical stance as moral superior to be the selfish one for once. The pair's ongoing exchange of roles is the dramatic meat of the story, with Irwin touchingly scrambling to support both at once, and Winger, in a casting coup, coolly resigned to stand behind the line she's drawn between her and both daughters.

As for the others, I don't know whether or not Lumet's script had Sydney (Tunde Adebimpe of *TV on the Radio*), Rachel's fiancé, be a musician or the guest list be brimming with countless other wildly diverse and enormously talented musicians, but, if it wasn't actually his idea, I'll bet Demme—director of *Stop Making Sense* and *Neil Young: Heart of Gold*—felt right at home with this very shrewd conceit. There is no underscoring: instead diegetic music fills *Rachel Getting Married*, with everyone from Demme's guitar-playing teenage son to Robyn Hitchcock seemingly always playing or rehearsing somewhere within earshot of the action, creating a stirring, sometimes humorous counterpoint to whatever's happening. Music gives an aesthetic unity to the story that helps support its necessary loose ends, and when, after a harrowing detour, the party finally starts, the whole movie just surrenders to it, filling up on movement and colour and celebratory gestures. Demme knows we've all earned it by that point, the characters and the audience, and the sense of release is tremendous, if fleeting. The next morning comes, a lot has changed, but changes take time to work themselves out, so the note we part on is calmer, bittersweet and deeply satisfying. ▽

FILM CAPSULES

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Stock and Two Smoking Barrels—but age, practice and marriage to Madonna haven't made his movies any better. This time around, Ritchie's motley crew is comprised of a couple of lower-echelon crooks (Gerard Butler and Idris Elba), an overconfident mob boss (Tom Wilkinson) and his smarter, classier right-hand (Mark Strong, who also narrates for some reason), a toxy super accountant (Thandie Newton, not acting so much as modeling a collection of tear-away power suits as prelude to an astounding-

ly lifeless and pointless booty call), a junky rock star with father issues (Toby Kebbell, impressively emaciated, seemingly on the verge of death) and a Russian billionaire with a soft spot for high-class prostitutes (Karel Roden).

Some are the slimy scumbags that try to screw everybody; others are just the regular scumbags that we're supposed to like. Any sense of relationship between the characters is nonexistent. Come to think of it, any sense of character is nonexistent. The actors are asked only to prop up a tired old hag of a plot involving the usual web of cons, the pathetic pretexts for violence, the slow-mo and fast-mo and the fussy montage

sequences that resemble corporate training videos with huge budgets. There are attempts at conveying a gentler, more sensitive side, but the hero's embracing of homosexuality only serves to exacerbate the boy's club atmosphere, while the attention given to junky wisdom makes for a regrettable detour, with Kebbell delivering a monologue about the life lessons to be learned from a pack of smokes that's a lot less profound than *Forrest Gump* and his metaphorical box of chocolates. In short, Ritchie seems to be on autopilot more than ever with *RocknRolla*—and he didn't even have the decency to use Priest on the soundtrack! ▽

Freedom!

Chris Cornell Screams again

EDEN MUMRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

Chris Cornell has covered a lot of musical ground over the years, sometimes in leaps and bounds and other times in gradual shifts. From the years he spent in Soundgarden to the three albums he recorded with Audioslave, there's been a definable progression in his writing. It's Cornell's solo material, though, that really highlights his desire to try out different approaches, from his first foray with the acoustic "Seasons" from the *Singles* soundtrack to his first two solo albums, *Euphoria Morning* and *Carry On*, there's been an apparent desire to push his limits beyond what he's done in the confines of his previous bands. Still, his upcoming solo album, *Scream*, is a marked departure from everything that Cornell has done in the past. The new record is a collaboration between Cornell and super-producer Timbaland, and it sounds very little like anything that either of them have created in the past. *Vue Weekly* spoke with Cornell recently, and this is what he had to say about the new album.

Vue Weekly: There's been an obvious evolution in the solo material that you've already released, but the sound of *Scream* is surprising in the extent that it departs from your earlier work.

Chris Cornell: The album actually starts with an introduction and then the music never stops. All of the songs have orchestral arrangements that kind of lead you out of the mood of the song that you're in and into the next one, and the music never stops for the hour until the album's finished.

So it started out as songwriting and ended up as kind of tying all of the songs together into almost a movie soundtrack experience, which has been an interesting sort of story to have to come out and try to tell in 2008 and 2009 because people are sort of becoming accustomed to the 20-second iTunes audition and downloading one song at a time—that's really become sort of the norm for the newest generation of music buyers, music consumers, and I just made this album where you have to sit down and listen to it for an hour. Whatever you do, at least give it that chance one time, and then if you want to buy one song or listen to one song over and over, fine.

PREVIEW

MON, NOV 10 (8 PM)
CHRIS CORNELL
WITH MOBILE
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE, \$52.50

It's been interesting, to me—and maybe it's because I've been in bands for so long and spent so much time in that band scenario—this is sort of what being a solo artist is all about. I guess I'm trying to cover territory that's interested me for years, and I'm trying to do it quickly because I feel that after being in bands for around 20 years, maybe with a two-year break in there, I'm a little bit behind in terms of my desire to try different approaches to songwriting and making albums.

You only live so long and there's so much to do. I could compare it to being a painter: every day is an opportunity for another painting and if you don't do it that day it's not going to exist.

VW: Did these songs start out with you and an acoustic guitar, or did you approach the writing differently?

CC: This was completely different. These were all beat-based and started that way. Every single one, with the exception of I guess two, were beats that Timbaland brought into the studio, and he would work on them at home or he would work on them after I would leave at night in the studio—he would just sit with headphones on and work on them and I would come in and start writing to them and recording parts and then we would just move on one at a time.

We didn't have several sitting around—we would focus on one and when it was finished we would go to the next one and when it was finished we'd go to the next one and we just kept working that way. I had set a couple of weeks aside before we started where I was thinking I would just go and come up with some ideas musically—maybe a little bit lyrically, but more musically—so that I would have some ideas to bring into the process.

But somewhere in those two weeks I changed my mind and I decided that I didn't want to do that, that I wanted to start completely from scratch from song to song and just sort of react to it, because the thing that I've wanted over the years that is a given, is that when you work with a new person creatively when it comes

to songwriting, you as a songwriter are going to come up with different melodies and lyrics and attitudes simply because you're reacting to someone else who's creating something that you've never written to before.

And there's usually a spark, it's usually a really exciting thing and an

inspiring thing, and that turned out to be the case totally. It's like the first time I got in the room with the three members of Audioslave we wrote a whole album in a couple of weeks—it was really easy because I had all these ideas based on the different sounds that they were bringing

because I'd never written to that type of a thing before so it was all fresh and it was all new

I think great songwriting partners—for example Lennon and McCartney

CONTINUES ON PAGE 55



Randall Stevin

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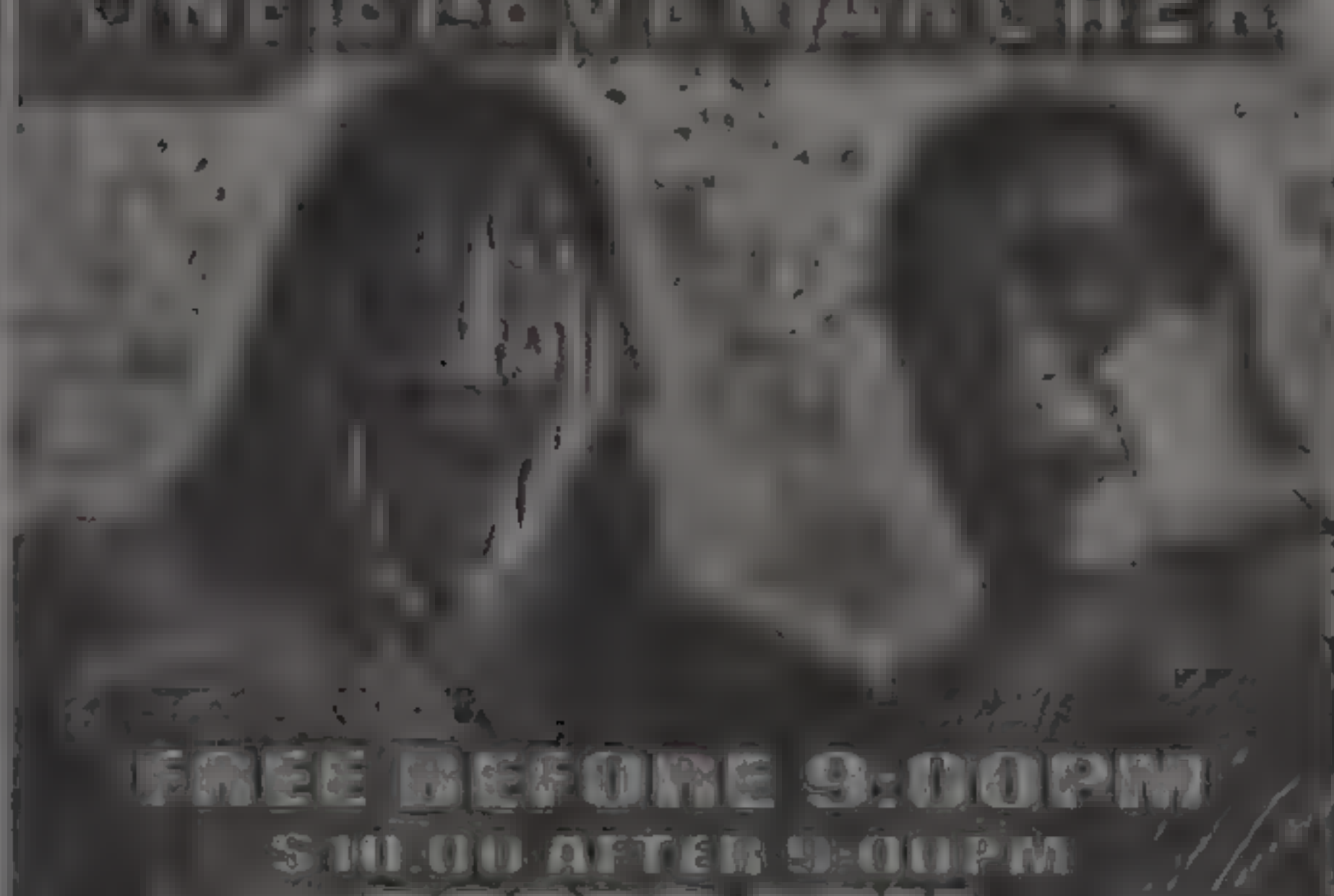
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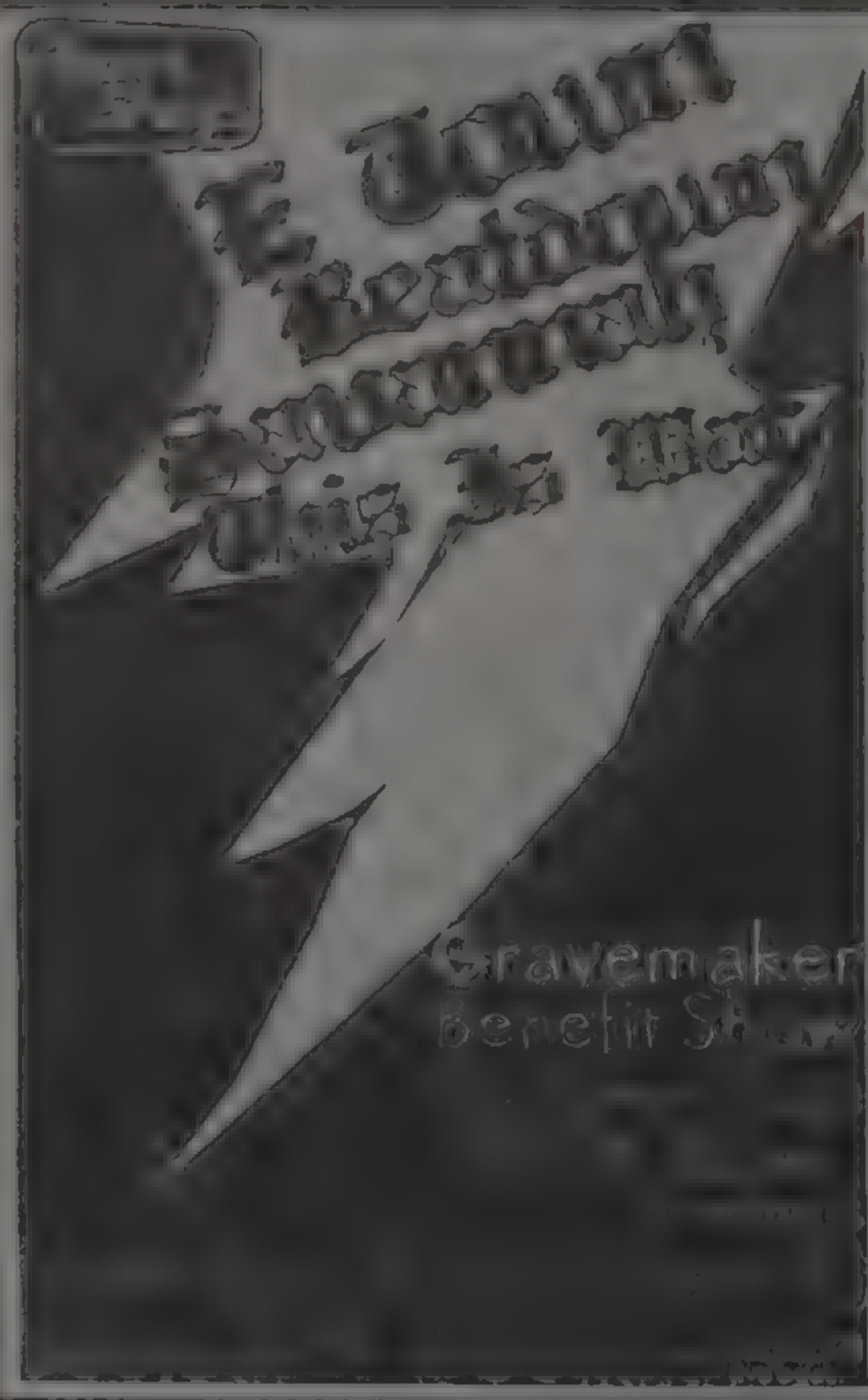
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MUSIC WEEKLY

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 8
10PM-11PM

THU LIVE MUSIC

PAERDAUGHT PUB

BLUE CHAIR CAFE

FLOORS ON WHYTE

CRIMINAL MINDS PUB

10pm

ROCKIN' PUB

BOSTON'S PUB

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POCKET INNOVATION ST. ALBERT
Thursdays breaks, electro house spun
DJ's: [illegible]

REMEMBER PUB

HOUSE with DJ Luc-E very Thursday

VELVET UNDERGROUND

[illegible]

WILD WEST SALOON

YACHT CLUB

ALYSSA'S BAR & GRILL

DJs

BACKSTAGE VODKA BAR

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ROCKY SOCIAL CLUB

HALLOP PUB

ROBERTA

JAMMER PUB

JEXYLL AND HYDE PUB

MYO HALL

ON THE ROCKS

PALACE CASINO (WEN)

PAWN SHOP

QUEEN ALEXANDRA HALL

STANFORD PUB

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ROCKY SOCIAL CLUB

HALLOP PUB

ROBERTA

JAMMER PUB

JEXYLL AND HYDE PUB

MYO HALL

ON THE ROCKS

PALACE CASINO (WEN)

PAWN SHOP

QUEEN ALEXANDRA HALL

STANFORD PUB

The money vs the music: round 2

MUSIC ENTER SANDOR

STEVEN SANDOR
sander@vancouverweekly.com

This marks the second week of the Enter Sandor roundtable on the economy, and now it is affecting the music industry. This week, we take a look at how government cutbacks to arts funding, especially in this time of economic crisis, have been seen in the arts community.

During the election, a lot of airtime was used to debate the Conservative Party's decision to cut millions in funding to arts programs, including PromArt, which helped artists promote themselves internationally. But, outside of Québec, the item had very little political currency.

But, with the economy continuing on its downward spiral, isn't this a time where musicians need the government's help more than they did, say, a year ago? Or is there, somewhere, an acceptance that, when times are bad, government is expected to have to slash programs?

According to Edmonton producer and musician Lane Arndt, grant applications are some of the few times where independent musicians actually need to cross over into the corporate, mainstream world.

"From the standpoint of people making honest independent music, we exist outside of that corporate superstructure anyway except for where grants are concerned," he says. "With this Harper dickhead's cuts in funding, maybe we will find fewer albums being made, which would of course be a drag for those of us who session on records

reasonably regularly."

So, less funding will mean fewer albums, and fewer bands with less-than-mainstream approaches being able to make their music available for mass consumption.

While concert promoter Brent Oliver (Brent Oliver Presents) is by no means a Conservative, he understands the reasoning behind the cutbacks. And he believes a lot of government money currently going to the music industry is based on an antiquated system where artists put out physical CDs, then go tour, then put out another album, then go tour.

Oliver says that federal agencies have to come to grips with the fact that, today, fan buzz is the number one method of promoting bands. So, federal money has got to go to the grassroots, to help bands get a digital single or make a YouTube video, not to simply put out a full album and then tour. There's no point for the feds to give a band dough to make a demo tape when no band gets signed to a label based on a demo tape anymore. Bands need to make progress in the grassroots, create buzz, put out a successful independent release or two, then graduate to the big—if they want to do so at all, that is.

"People have to adapt or die," Oliver says. "The old model that some managers still have of putting out an album every couple of years and then touring, well that's gone."

"Fans should be the ones developing the artists. Take a look at Matt and Kim (the Brooklyn dance punk duo). Go check out a YouTube video of them. They are playing to an audience of 500 people who know the words to all the songs. And

they don't have a label."

AND, AS FAR AS funding—and fees artists pay to keep the funding going—Oliver thinks its time to make some changes to the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN), which is supposed to compensate musicians for their licensed work. But, in practice, Oliver says SOCAN simply taxes smaller bands who need the money and then redistributes it to the rich bands, who don't need the extra help. Robin Hood in reverse, if you will.

Each and every promoter pays a percentage of ticket sales to SOCAN, which is supposed to redistribute the funds to help Canadian artists. That's the idea. But, that's not necessarily the practice. Why? Because SOCAN distributes money based on airplay surveys; on commercial radio, the Buttless Chaps or Cadence Weapon are not going to get the airplay of Nickelback or Theory of a Deadman, so money migrates from smaller acts to the bigger acts.

"SOCAN takes three per cent of the tickets sales and 95 per cent of the artists don't apply to get the money back that belonged to them in the first place," he says. "So, it's distributed to the richest bands. If Hayden sells 1000 tickets to a church show in Edmonton, SOCAN takes three per cent of the tickets and, at the end of the year, he doesn't get the money back, even though people paid to see his show. So, the money goes to Nickelback."

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

SUN LIVE MUSIC

APPROXIMATE COMMUNITY HALL

BLUES CHAIR CAFE: Original Blues

BLUES ON WHYTE: Kymara

BLUES ON WHYTE: The Weybourne

EDDIE SHORTS: Live music open

THE IRISH PUB: Irish Music

THE IRISH PUB: Irish Music

THE IRISH PUB: Irish Music

THE IRISH PUB: Irish Music

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BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE: Sunday Afternoons: Phil, 2-7pm, Main Floor Got To Give It Up: Funk, Soul, Motown, Disco with DJ Red Dawn

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB: Rudy Electro latest and greatest in House, Progressive and Trip-Hop: 12am-2:30am, interested guest DJs inquire at kelly@michetti.com, karaoke with Tizzy, amateur strip contest: 9pm-1:30am

CLUB MASTIFF: Mondays, with DJ S.W.A.G.

FLUID LOUNGE: Mondays Muxer

NEW CITY LUNGE LOUNGE: Munch on Metal Mondays: 80s metal with DJ Sammi Kerr; no minors, no cover

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Hookah and Rear Admiral Saunders

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DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE: Main Floor: CJSR's Eddie Lunchpail, Woottop: Dub at The Dog with DJ Degree

BUDDY'S: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser, 9pm

ESMERALDA'S: Retro every Tue, no cover with student ID

GINGER SKY: Bashment Tuesdays

RED STAR: Tuesdays: Experimental Indie Rock, Hip Hop, Electro with DJ Hot Philly

SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE: Tapas Tuesday: popular house beats with DJ Kevin Wong

SPORTSWORLD ONLINE KARAOKE AND ROLLER SKATING DISCO: Retro Night, 7-10:30pm, www.sports-world.ca

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STEEPS TEA LOUNGE: Open mic (acoustic) every Wed

TEMPLE: Wyld Style Wednesday Live hip hop, every Wed, \$5

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\$39.55

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451-8000 AND CENTURY CASINO

**APRIL SOND
WINNIE**

NOV 20/21

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451-8000 AND CENTURY CASINO

**Pink Floyd
Outside The Wall**

NOV 25

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**BARNEY
BENTALL
and the
LEGENDARY HEARTS**

DEC 10

\$39.55/\$49.55
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451-8000 AND CENTURY CASINO

**HERMAN'S
WERNIT
FEATURING PETER NOONE**

DEC 31

\$59.55/\$69.55/\$79.55
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STONES
TRIBUTE
BLUSHING BRIDES
PLUS THE RUM BROTHERS**

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Odds and ends

It's not just the music that drives a live performance

MUSIC BACKLASH BLUES

A few observations can be gleaned from the average stadium rock show. In the excitement of being among a collected mass sharing a potentially life-affecting performance moment, one forgets the fact that some people need binoculars to tell who's actually singing. Some people can't find their seats so the flashlights in your peripheral vision tell more of the story than the show does. Someone behind you starts a semi-successful "LET'S GO TO THE CHORUS!" chant. The whole case for my Bob Dylan experience, a moment I've dreamed about and summarily dreaded for these very reasons. Seeing Dylan's 21st century sunset with a \$7.75 Molson Canadian is not the same as tapping your foot at the Gaslight with a coffee in 1960s New York. But I must wonder, are there any people who can make this comparison from direct experience?

The nature of live music lends itself to variation. Depending on the performer's

mood, physical wellness or the conditions of the venue, a show can be good or bad for reasons other than the quality of the actual music. In Spain for the Summercase festival, I had the opportunity to see the live incarnation of DFA's The Juan Maclean twice in two days. The first show in Barcelona was a mind-altering experience. Extremely precise interplay between Maclean and LCD Soundsystem keyboardist/vocalist Nancy Whang and several impressive theremin players. The second was a live

The next day in Madrid, I cajoled some Australians I met into ditching Maximo Park to take in Maclean, selling them on the New York affair with its spiritual like hours. This show was a victim of technical problems, with the band complaining about the sound on stage and generally behaving derisively towards the non-English speaking sound techs. The group's unlikeable stance and confused performance couldn't break the audience the same way my Barcelona rave did. Perception changed with location and mood, even though the set contained the same songs both times.

THIS PAST THURSDAY, Rock in the City

hawk show at the Pawn Shop in order to reinforce this concept of venue altering perception. After hearing hype about the Vancouver rock outfit from the local kids, I made some time for them at Virgin Fest in Calgary this summer to my own chagrin. The band was not aggressive with the festival audience so far away from the stage and I could scarcely focus on absorb any of the songs as a result. As predicted, the more intimate show was a significantly better showcase of the band's ability to craft emotionally stirring, complex rock songs.

Seeing Bob Dylan skipping lyrics and generally reeling through the years in front of a few of the richer Albertans in our municipality was not necessarily surprising to me, because I've heard live recordings of his before and had been relayed plenty of second-hand show reviews before I set foot in Rexall Place. Perhaps my preconceptions about these shows affected my feelings about them just as much as the actual quality of performance, but the location and the performer's physical condition didn't help the show much either. ▽

Such a Beautiful World

Eliza Gilkyson looks at society in her songs

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vancouverweekly.com

It's hard to believe that Texan Eliza Gilkyson doesn't think of herself as a political songwriter. She has penned condemnations of George W several times, questioned the excesses of corporate capitalism and mourned our collective apathy.

"I really think of myself as a societal songwriter. I think that I'm sociological in my repertoire—maybe I should say socio-political," she laughs. "As an individual, my personal journey has crossed paths now with politics—but that never really happened before the last five years."

She points out that on her latest album, *Beautiful World*, she wasn't overtly "anti-neo-con." And while it's true that she doesn't really name names, the lyrics could elicit "pinko-lefty" handles from certain segments of society.

"You're right—I am a radical lefty. What I think of as normal discourse is left-leaning politics and it comes into my music," she says. "When I say I'm not a political person—I think of myself as being a musician and a poet—but I think politics is really on my mind, capitalism is on my mind, unsustainability is on my mind, environment is on my mind, our future, my grandchildren are on my mind, so that's what's going to come up in my poetry and my music."



PREVIEW FRI, NOV 7 (7:30 PM)
ELIZA GILKYSON
ARDEN THEATRE, \$28

AFTER ALL THAT, it should be said that *Beautiful World* does much more than get angry at the state of the world. Gilkyson has been a musician for too long—her first album was released in 1979—to offer up anything so one dimensional. Like the title suggests, Gilkyson offers up at least as much to hope for as she does to condemn, and finds connections to unify rather than divide. She finds that balance between the urgency she feels over

the state of the world and not preaching from on high.

"No one wants to be talked at. That doesn't serve anybody, and I myself am turned off by sort of message music. My first goal is to make great music, and that's always been the most important thing to me," she explains. "On this last record, because there is that sense of urgency, this time I found myself walking was keeping things personal and intimate. That is very important to me, so that there's a sort of a universal theme, but it's expressed through intimate imagery. That to me keeps it poetic and keeps it engaging."

Part of what keeps Gilkyson's lyrics engaging is seeing her really come into her own. Her sense of urgency is not only about the environment, politics or the economy; it also manifests into a desire to understand herself as an artist. As any musician could hope for, each new album over the last decade or so, since 1996's *Redemption Road* has realized successively deeper understandings of her truths.

"I say first and foremost, you want to be true to the artist within and be the artist that uniquely you are," she says. "That's everything for me. And then the lyrics and the sentiment floats on those wings." ▽



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PREVIEW
SAT, NOV 8 (7 PM)
SIRENS NIGHT OF ROCK & BLUES
JACK SEMPLE AND HIS BAND
WITH THE CAMERON BROS BAND
BOULDER ROOM/EDMONTON/ALBERTA/ALL AGES

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuuweekly.com
Since winning the MuchMusic Guitar Wars in 1992, Regina's Jack Semple has been touring the country in his various bands and as a solo performer, showcasing his incredibly intricate guitar work which combines lightning fast speed with flamenco rhythms, resulting in something akin to heavy metal guitar virtuosity but with a real backbone of rollicking blues. To that end, Semple will be headed to Edmonton this weekend where he'll perform as a part of Support to Individuals at Risk in Everyone's Neighbourhood Society's Night of Rock and Blues, a fundraiser for the society which helps improve the lives of aboriginal youth and the mentally ill in the Edmonton area.



Semple's distinctive style comes from his study of flamenco as a teenager, as well as his commitment to his own individual playing style.
"Most electric guitar players use a pick, but I have acrylic fingernails on all five fingers of my right hand so it's like having a pick attached to each finger, which is kind of a strange thing but it's just how I evolved because when I was learning how to play I studied flamenco

when I was a teenager," he says, before reflecting on the odd looks he sometimes gets wearing the fingernails full time. "Well that's the challenging part when they look at you like 'I mean, I have no fingernails on my left hand they're very short, so I have a normal left hand but my right hand looks like Freddy Krueger or a werewolf or something, so it's a little odd. It's my burden to bear.'"
But those fingernails might be for naught if they didn't have a guitar to play and Semple's been playing his for over three decades: a blond Fender Stratocaster that is pretty much stock, Semple says except for the frets, which he wears out about once every eight months.
"That's my Lucille," he says, referencing BB King's famous guitar. "I've had that guitar for 30 years, and it got stolen once and it was missing for about two weeks and one of my students found it in the dumpster behind their apartment and so I got it back. So I don't take it for granted, I cherish the guitar. I love it, it's my baby." ▽

CHRIS CORNELL

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Jewel of the Nile

Roots singer/songwriter Tamara Nile (aka **T Nile**) can thank her father for introducing her to the banjo. A year after her father bought her the instrument, Nile began exploring its sound after stumbling upon the music of artists such as Sufjan Stevens and Iron & Wine. Shortly after getting a few banjo lessons from her father, she wrote "Trees" from her 2006 debut *At the Table*. Nile can also thank her father, a multi-instrumentalist street performer who she began travelling with at age six, for introducing her to the life of an independent musician.

Sometimes when I tell people that my dad was a busker, they don't quite understand what it was, but there's a real tradition of busking that's been around for quite some time, especially with one-man bands," says Nile. "In fact, there's a one-man band in Alberta called Dan the One Man Band and that's my dad's name! [Dan the One Man Band] and I have become Facebook and MySpace friends as a result because people always ask him if he's the dad."

These days, most buskers perform alone and more often than not are ignored. But what if children are present?

When [my dad was] a younger

PREVIEW

THU. NOV 13 (8 PM)
T NILE
HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB, \$15 (ADVANCE); \$18 (DOOR)

guy, he looked kind of intimidating. He had a big beard, he was quite muscular, and he looked a little bit tough," Nile recollects. "He used to tell me that he loved it when we traveled together because people would find him less threatening."

"One thing he would get me and my sister to do is be what he'd call 'shills,'" she continues. "He gave us some money and we'd just stand there watching. When the song was finished, we'd throw money into his basket and by us standing there, a whole bunch of other people would come."

REMINISCING/HOW her childhood resembled that of a homeless person when she accompanied her father to his street performances, Nile notes the unpleasant side of sometimes having to go to McDonald's washrooms on some mornings to brush her teeth or wash her face or use the toilet because the RV they travelled in did not contain one.

"Believe it or not, [though], we had a wooden stove in [the RV]! [My dad] built it by hand so it was

almost like a little cabin," says Nile. "Sometimes I felt like a street urchin. Sometimes [my dad would] be working and I wouldn't have much to do so I'd go and hang out with the homeless people who

were all very nice. I never had a bad experience once with a homeless person."

Nile has no regrets of her childhood but admits a little surprise that she made it through unharmed while

exploring places like downtown San Francisco and Seattle.

"I think kids are a lot safer than we would think. Having said that, if and when I have kids, I don't know if I'd want them to do [what I did]," ▼



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The amazing Turtleboy!

Bassless jazz trio improvises across genres

MARIA KOTOVYCH / maria@vuweekly.com

For many people, the image of a jazz trio would not be complete without a bass player. Regardless, some groups prefer to deviate from the usual conventions of a genre, straying outside of the perceived limits. Perhaps this is why Ryan Butler, guitarist of Turtleboy, emphasizes that the group's music crosses a number of musical categories, including jazz, rock and others. And because Turtleboy doesn't have a bass player, this gives the music a unique sound and an ability to improvise in ways that might not otherwise exist.

"It allows for a lot more space in the music, an open kind of feeling to it," Butler says over the phone from Banff, where Turtleboy just spent several weeks at the Banff Centre's Fall Career Development Residency. "[The] lack of a bass player really lets us explore a lot of things. For one thing, there's really no low register. As a guitar player, it gives me a lot of freedom harmonically to play around. And there's just that much more space in the music. So it's a very open kind of vibe to our music."

Butler mentions that Turtleboy has been strongly influenced by the Paul Motian Trio, which also plays without a bassist. For Turtleboy, the decision not to have a bass player occurred two summers ago, during the Montréal Jazz Fest. After receiving a last-minute call to do a gig at a coffee shop, and being unable to find a bassist, the musicians decided to do the show with drums, tenor sax and guitar. And they liked the chemistry that resulted. The trio played together for fun for a while before taking a serious turn to apply for grant funding and to record its first album.

But before the musicians could

PREVIEW

SAT, NOV 8 - SAT, NOV 15
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apply for funding, they had to select a group name. And the application deadline was looming.

"We were in a rush, and we needed a band name, and we didn't want to call it the Ryan Butler Trio or the Jon Lindhorst Trio," Butler explains. "So it was kind of a last-minute decision. We went with Turtleboy."

The group name comes from the song "Turtleboy," which was composed by Jonathan Lindhorst, the group's tenor saxophonist. This song was the first tune the trio played together as a group. A Turtleboy character, which Lindhorst's brother Christopher, designed, also graces the album's cover.

IN DESCRIBING THE group's music, Butler emphasizes its improvisational nature; the musicians are free to improvise however they want within the boundaries of the melody, form, and harmonic progression of each song. Even though Turtleboy shares the improvisational element with traditional jazz, this group's songs don't follow the standard structure of a conventional jazz tune. There's that cross-genre thing again.

Butler says that he feels great about the release of Turtleboy's debut album, especially considering that he and the others are just a couple of years out of their undergraduate programs.

"It's kind of a pinnacle step in all our careers. It was a really gratifying feeling to play the debut in Calgary!"

wrote these amazing songs one after another—you would think they could do it forever, but I think it becomes difficult. For example, I think for Elton John to sit down with a sheet of Bernie Taupin lyrics and just bang out a song that is as inspired and fresh and amazing as what he would have done 30 years ago or however long it's been, it's probably not going to happen simply because those lyrics are sort of pushing the same button.

So that was kind of the attitude that I went in with: I've never written songs with Timbaland and I've never worked with him in a creative way, so I'm just going to go in with nothing and just react and it turned out to be the best thing to do.

VW: When did you become aware of the sort of thing that Timbaland is

do. I was first aware of it—and I'm

guessing how long ago—this was eight years ago maybe, from a Missy Elliott track. There were a couple that I really keyed in on because it was really interesting. There was one particular song that there were birds chirping in it that was part of the beat. I remember feeling a little bit envious as someone in the rock field making albums, where people in hip hop were making sounds and songs out of virtually anything because it wasn't really instrumentation-based anymore, it was found sounds and rhythms that were either looped or created and then looped—basically no rules.

And then as hip hop sort of grew, it grew into also incorporating live musicians and that's when it became interesting because now you could do anything. And with rock it wasn't so much necessarily that way. I remember touring with Faith No More where fans would get mad that they had a piano player and I would think, "But, what about Led Zeppelin and the Doors and what about *Who's Next* and Pink Floyd?" It made no sense to me.

So I remember then that I didn't know who the producer was, but I found out later that it was Timbaland. That was I think the first time where it sort of crossed my radar and I thought about it and then I heard more and more stories about how he approached recording.

But I think there was also a different dynamic that I knew about going into it, which was that I'm someone who can go in with a clear head and no chip on my shoulder and no baggage because I've written 15 albums, I'm a songwriter, I've written hundreds and hundreds of songs, so I can go in and work with someone like that where it's not the same type of relationship that he might have for example with a pop star, where if he's producing a pop album and you've got this sort of persona you're dealing with that's really more important than what songs you're writing and you just have to make hits. We didn't really have any aspect of that in this process—for us it was just about making a great album. v

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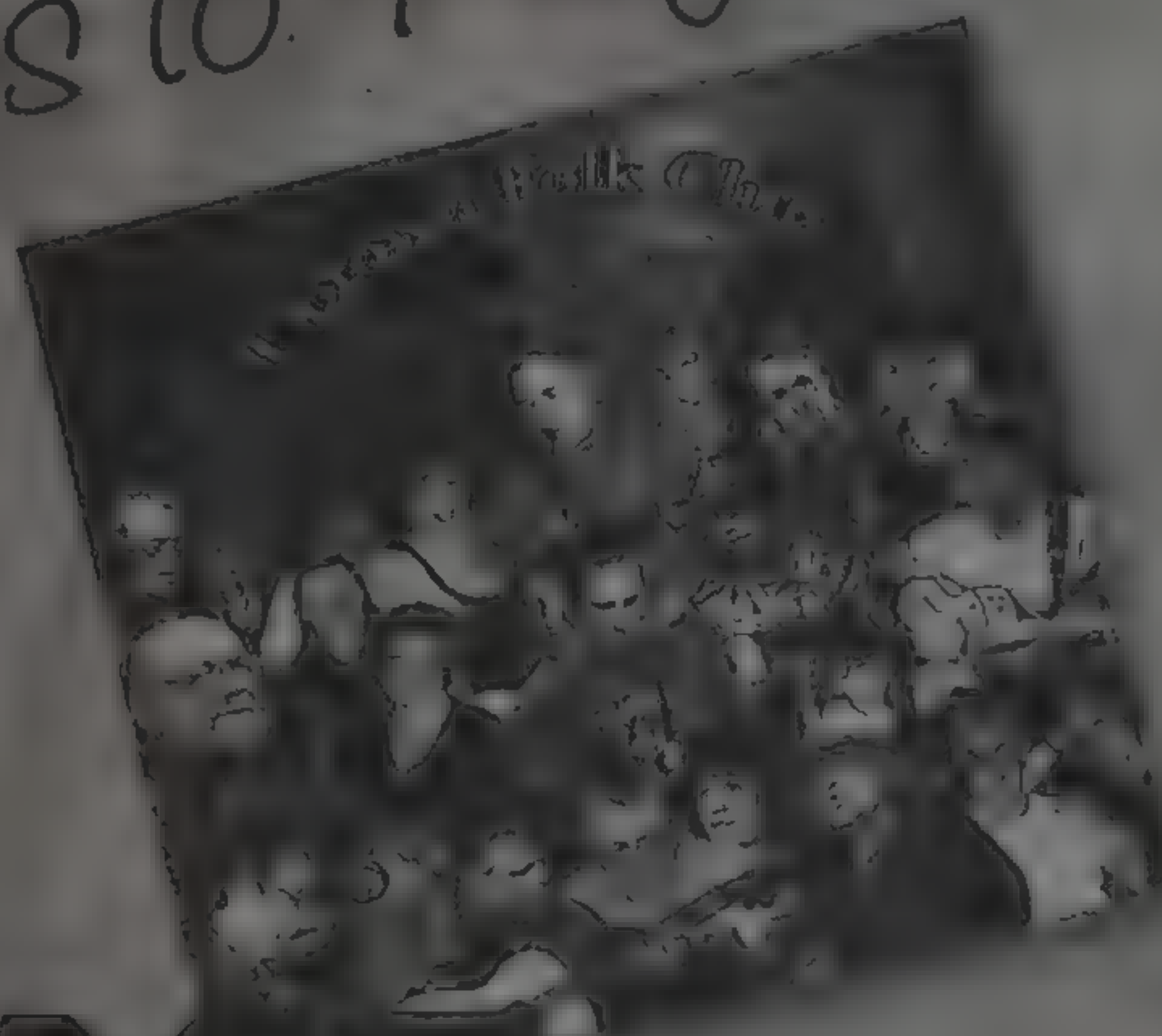
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Dance, dance, dance

The Oracle Band is more than just music

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vuweekly.com

It appears that I've once again caught someone running an errand. Frontman **Josh Reichmann** of the Oracle band is carrying some food that he's just ordered when I call. It's only appropriate then that we discuss something food-related—such as musical tastes.

Before teaming up with the Oracle Band, Reichmann had played with punk band Tangiers before the group called it quits after completing its third record in mid-2000.

"I'm sure my tastes have changed a little bit," reflects Reichmann. "Tangiers was a rock band that was kind of limited to a certain palette of 'rock stuff.' [My current band] gives me the freedom to experiment and showcase some other things I'm interested in."

A new listener who decides to head to the band's MySpace expecting to hear the Oracle Band's self-described "R&B / gothic" style may be baffled to find that the music on the band's recently released EP, *Life is Legal*, is actually a rather upbeat-sounding concoction of instruments that includes piano and saxophone.

"I think [R&B's] more of an influence. I don't know if we sound R&B-ish—I don't really listen to R&B besides R Kelly," Reichmann confesses. "Some of the stuff that we're trying to do is soul music. Putting R&B on MySpace is kind of a joke. I mean people write like 'Ghetto-tech' [there]."

IN ADDITION TO a diversity of musical instruments, the Oracle band has incorporated another type of art: dance. Reichmann's girlfriend, Laura

PREVIEW
SAT, NOV 8 (9 PM)
**JOSH REICHMANN
ORACLE BAND**
MAIN FLOOR OF TALK
PAWNIER SHOP, \$12

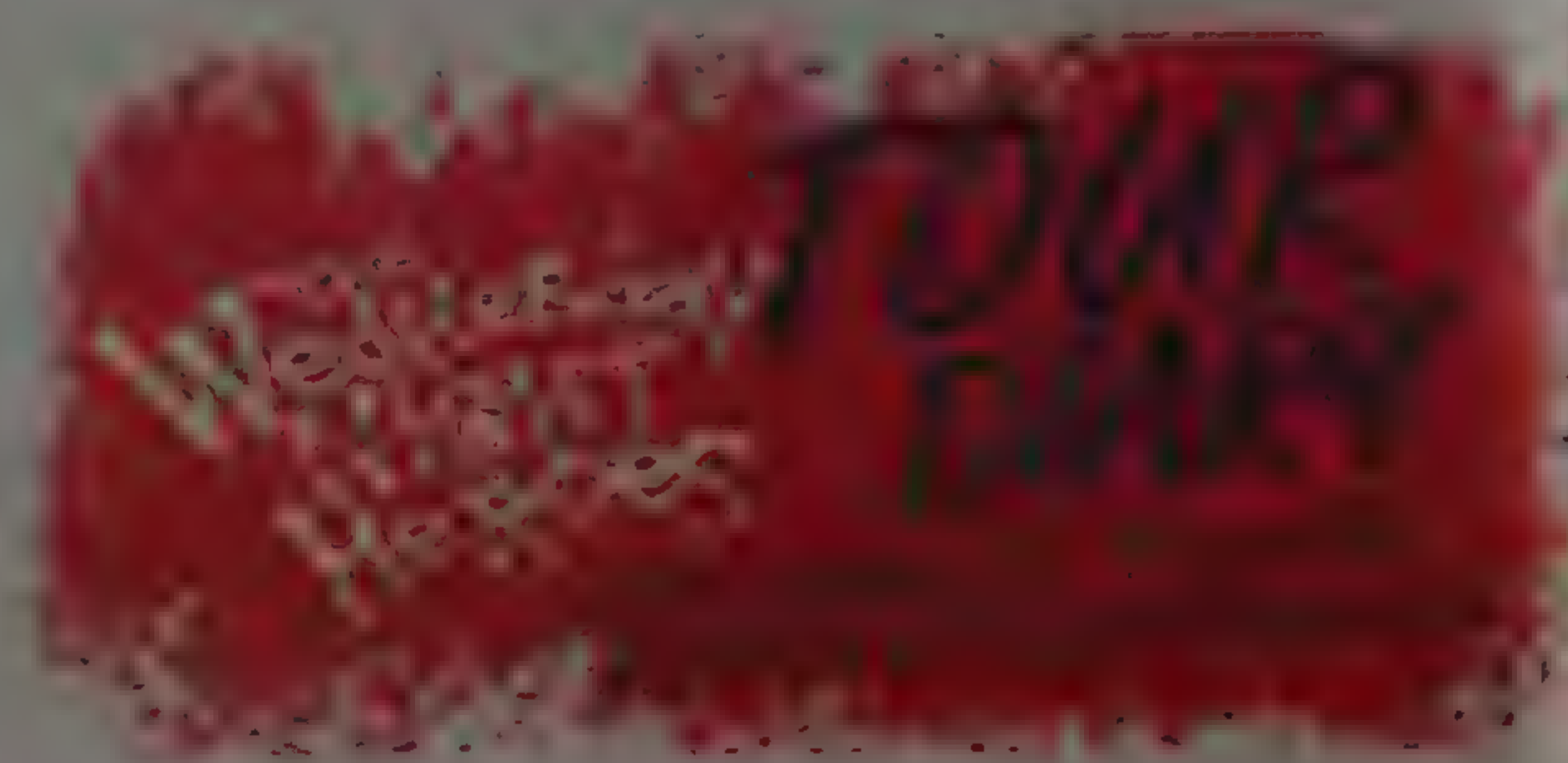
Bolton, was trained in the Nation Ballet and sometimes performs modern dances during the band's live performances when she isn't playing tambourine and bells. Unfortunately, Bolton won't be present when the band comes to town this week due to a schedule conflict.

"[Laura] dances around trying to evoke the spirits with maybe a tribal dance," says Reichmann of the band shows that Bolton has been in the people have someone else to look besides me."

With Bolton being a professionally trained dancer, Reichmann notes the differences between her and the rest of the band in terms of work ethic.

"We haven't been punished in doing what we do," he says. "We haven't only punished each other and we haven't been punished by the media but we aren't in a hyper-disciplined environment. I don't think [rock musicians] are as disciplined in their environments as an [11-year-old dancer] in the National Ballet."

"I'm not saying we're not disciplined because every player in my band graduated from [the University of Toronto] or jazz school," he adds. "These are not slacker, three-chord rock musicians. They're like pros who play horns and stuff. So they are people who are pretty disciplined but they're in this band to express something more personal." ▼



Maggots!

Sleazy P Martini looks into the credit crunch

by GINTLES / bryan@vancouverweekly.com

Gwar, those bloodthirsty aliens intent on the destruction of all humanity—who also happen to love heavy metal—will be making a return to Edmonton this week and will be rejoined by none other than their brilliant manager Sleazy P Martini, the world's shrewdest businessman. Having not toured with the band a number of years, many fans were wondering whether Martini was still pulling the strings or if Gwar had any direction at all these days.

It turns out that they do. Martini may have been taking a break from hitting the road with the members of Gwar, but he was still in charge, and still raking in all of the dough. He just had to concentrate on some other business ventures for awhile.

"There was no problem," he says when asked what kept him from touring. "I was simply cementing my control over the entire world's porn industry."

It's this control that will enable Martini, for the first time ever, to lend a hand to his fellow Americans. While Gwar is best known for wishing death upon all human beings everywhere, the recent world financial crisis has seen Martini begin looking for a solu-

PREVIEW SAT, NOV 8 (7 PM)
GWAR
WITH KINGDOM OF SORROW
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE, \$32.50 (ALL AGES)

tion to the problem in order to alleviate the suffering in the world, and make a buck while he's at it.

"Lemme tell ya, I know that America is worried that there's a credit crunch going on right now, but I have a plan. I'm going to have America employed in the new porn industry," he says, intimating that each man, woman and child will be forced to perform. "We're going to suck and fuck our way back to prosperity. At home, as a family, working, striving, achieving, bringing back the American dream of wealth and prosperity for all."

"Fucking is all we've got left, nothing we make sells. Let's face it, we got nothing. No cars, no electronics, we got no credit, we're fucked. Thus, we must fuck our way back to prosperity."

THAT BEING SAID, Martini and his charges in Gwar have not abated in their killing sprees that pass for heavy metal performances. Since the return of Sleazy P Martini, however, these killing sprees

have entailed more economic upside for the ever money-hungry manager.

"The capacity of the club is just the capacity of the club, but it's

what you do with the leftovers. I've even got a dog food line out of all these corpses. It's a beautiful thing—I ship 'em over to China, they

slip a little melamine in, everybody's happy," he says. "We pick the fillings from the teeth, silver, gold, grills, we get it all. Medallions, buttons, vintage rock 'n' roll buttons—all of it recycled and resold. That's where the business sense that I have, the acumen I have as the world's shrewdest man, comes in. Gwar doesn't have that, they don't even have a concept of money. I've managed to convince them it's just worthless green pieces of paper, I've managed to fool them for 24 years and I aim to keep it that way."

Another thing that Martini has made sure of is that the audio quality of Gwar is at a level that he finds acceptable. Always striving to better the band he has helped nurture, Martini is constantly looking into new technologies to make the music sound even better.

"A lot of people used to say our early albums sounded like they were recorded over a phone, but now our albums are recorded over two phones simultaneously, giving it a stereo sound." ♡



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REVIEWS NEW SOUNDS

Lubo & Kaba Horo, Contrabanda (Cross Current Music) There's been a great renewal in the past few years of global sounds, a rehabilitation of "world music" as the indie explosion has sent a broader swath of listeners out seeking interesting new rhythms, textures and instrumentation. Musicians have not been immune, digging into their own heritage or paying homage to other cultures: The Acorn pep pering *Glory Hope* (Widdowson) with its American indigenous instruments and patterns, Beirut exploring gypsy reels and ballads, Ghost Bees and Geoff Berner echoing strains of their distant Jewish ancestors' sung prayers and folk balladeering.

It also travels in the opposite direction, with immigrants to North America like Gogol Bordello's Ukrainian frontman Eugene Hütz unwilling to give up punk (itself traditionally influenced by Jamaican music) and rock 'n' roll or his beloved homegrown sounds, and instead defiantly pogo-ing with a foot in each world.

The goal of most artists reaching into this sonic treasure trove isn't to replicate, but to contemporize, to thread the past to the present and toss the whole ball into a future of riotous individuality as well as community via a shared aural adventure-someness. And so we pile influence upon influence, texture upon texture, language upon language, until a musical polyglot emerges, reaching backwards and forwards in time, celebrating a human experience that is malleable and multi-sphered, a cultural multiplicity that becomes its own 21st century culture.

Into this groove slides Lubo Alexandrov and his band Kaba Horo, a group of Bulgarian and Montréal-based musicians with a backbone steeped in jazz improv and funk fusion and a taste for the sounds of the eastern

Mediterranean and Balkans.

Contrabanda is the ensemble's second release, the follow-up to last year's *Contrabanda*.

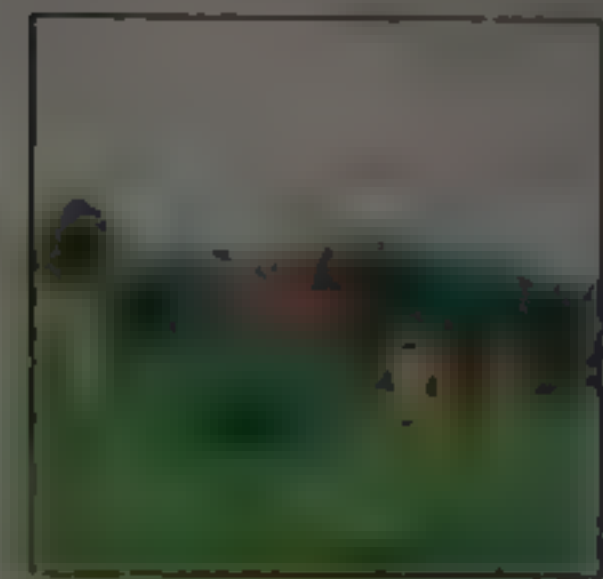
A few tracks showcase the band's jazz heart, with the self-conscious displays of intellectualism and artistry that characterize that discipline,

while the rest of the album is generally more directly appealing and spirited.

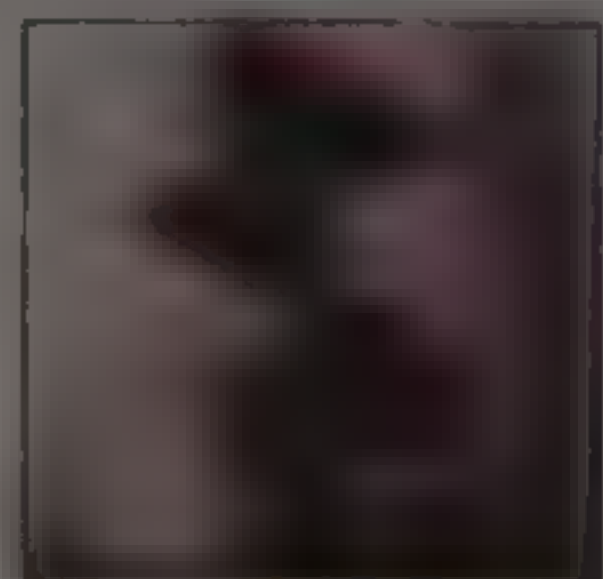
The band has a ferocity of attack that is compelling, and although its largely instrumental offerings sidestep the easy hooks of the pop songform, this is convivial and smokingly celebratory music, a lively rollercoaster deftly constructed and gleefully ridden by a group of talented music-makers and their many guests. If this is the party they create on the static medium of digital recording, one can only imagine how combustible they would be in person. —MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuweekly.com



Artist of the Year, Velour Brigade (CHEEZYsOUND(z)) Apparently, the best record of 2008 sounds like the strange and terrifying release of Daft Punk and Super Mario. The late release from Artist of the Year, which sounds like it should be from Europe but the group actually hails from Québec, is creative in its origins, but ultimately predictable. A typical track begins with strange and appealing fusion—say acoustic jazz meets techno—and then gradually shifts to the inevitable synth-heavy dance freak-out. Though it's generally not bad (outside of the acutely annoying, thankfully rare outbursts of nasal vocals), most songs on *Velour Brigade* sound interchangeable after their halfway mark. For serious fans of electronica only. —LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vuweekly.com



Bloc Party, Intimacy (Warner) It's a strange night out: electro-pulsing over there, airy tracks here, some sonic thrashing out on the floor. Interesting moments collide but it's hard to get a sense of the whole party. In the rumble of "Mercury," "Talons" and "Signs," the wistful lyrics and urgency of Keli Okereke's voice hang on taut wires of sound. "Trojan Horse" opens up to reveal a romantic tension. But not enough of *Intimacy* reconciles the fiery and tender. "Halo" sounds a little like the group trying out old motions. "Zephyrus" fails to operationally mix choral and electronic arrangements. Folk-echoing "Letter to My Son" suggests yet another direction that could've been. The experimenting is intriguing but sputters. *Intimacy* sifts through the ashes of a flamed-out relationship, but it doesn't throw up enough sparks — BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vuweekly.com



Japanther, Tut Tut Now Shake Ya Butt (Wantage USA) Japanther comes through with another collection of songs that are desperate in their romantic yearning, filled with pop happy samples and devastating in the wall of sound they thrust through your speakers. On *Tut Tut Now Shake Ya Butt*, this feeling is summed up best on "The Dirge," the first song on the B-side. Claiming that he's nothing, and his girl friend is everything, the protagonist forgives her infidelity and says she can "always come back to me." Japanther is also well known for its artistic collaborations, and *Tut Tut Now Shake Ya Butt* contains two long poems written and read by Penny Rimbaud, co-founder of Crass, with backing music by Japanther. The poems can feel like left turns when listening to the album as a whole—they certainly break the flow to a certain degree—but they offer a different and interesting look into the minds of a group of exciting artists. —BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuweekly.com



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light on... your time ain't long
 (a mississippi)

love is overtaking me

top 10 sellers

01. soft airplane chad van gaalen
 02. malador singles '08 jay reatard
 03. domkirke sunn o)))
 04. dear science tv on the radio
 05. skeletal lamping of montreal

06. uganda akira ishikawa & count buffalo
 07. chemistry of common life fucked up
 08. s/t vivian girls
 09. supreme genius of king khan
 10. 1970s eigenan proto-rai underground v/a

John Legend, *Evolver* (Columbia) / My dreams about Barack Obama now have a soundtrack, and I don't just mean

"If You're Out There," the track available for download on the new US president's website. I also heard him humming in my sleep to Legend's highly listenable collaborations with Andre 3000, Kanye West and Brandy, who opens his third album with some sexy dance rhythms. The studly piano ballads still hold up, though they sound a lot like the ones he's already known for. But nothing beats the triumphant camp of Legend's support of the Democratic party, with lyrics calling out for change and equality. I swear to Mary, a dove just flew out of my ghetto blaster.

Suzie Vinnick, *Happy Here* (Nonesuch) Suzie Vinnick creates cheerfully populist folk-informed country rock—impeccably crafted and richly textured—and she's got a set of golden pipes on that should be what all the mainstream music divas are actually blessed with, rather than tinny replicas they tend to have. But unfortunately, Vinnick's songs are incredibly tepid stuff topic-wise, platitudes that think they are poetry, the way well-made landscape paintings think they are art. Seriously, songs like the title track, "Back on My Feet" and "Believe in Yourself" could soundtrack the lamest overcoming-adversity-movie-of-the-week. It's not even that I'm prejudiced against this genre of music—Eliza Gilkinson does a mind-blowing job of it without whipping out a cliché every two lines, instead presenting us with a rich mosaic of emotion and moods while remaining firmly appealing to mature and mainstream listeners. Heartbreak and recovery are more shaded than the narrow range the supremely talented Vinnick offers us, and women deserve more from culture that supposedly panders to them. It just lacks bravery and breadth.—MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuweekly.com

Vivian Girls, *Vivian Girls* (In the Red) I don't just like Vivian Girls because the droning, noisy punk rock, with its lush reverby vocals, gets me going; I also like the group because it's named after the creations of one of my favourite artists, Henry Darger. Darger was a janitor in Chicago who died in 1973. When they—who? You know, them—opened up his apartment they found that he had devoted his life to the creation of a book and a series of gigantic paintings that depicted a group of children called the Vivian Girls who were fighting for their freedom from adults who were out to hurt them. He also collected every Pepto Bismol bottle he ever used, and he used a lot. Anyway, his paintings were amazing, and so is this album.—BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuweekly.com

MUSIC OLD SOUNDS

Johnny Cash, *Look at them Beans* (Columbia) Originally released: 1975 There it is. The silliest song one could possibly imagine, Johnny Cash screaming aloud, "Look at them beans / And look at that corn / And I bet them watermelons must be three-foot long."

And yet there's something absolutely hypnotizing about the title track to Cash's 1975 album. Built around just a few notes during the verse, with Cash performing a spoken-word tale of farming and family like a possessed preacher, rising up from a gentle speech into an excited fervor as the band picks each successive note a little bit harder, until Cash finally lets loose with the hollering on the chorus and the horns join the fray with celebratory punctuations.

Is "Look at them Beans" a great song? No, not really. But it is a fantastic performance, a demonstration of the power of dynamics and an example of what Cash was capable of vocally.

It's not that there aren't some good songs on this record. Guy Clark's "Texas 1947" is definitely one of those, but for the most part the songwriting is entrenched firmly in the middle of the road—mediocre songs that are better suited to a bad saloon band than Cash.

Most of all, though, it's the production that drives the stake into the heart of the album. This is bland, over-

polishing at its worst, and it's a shame that this is where Cash ended up only a few short years after the rawness that was captured on his live records from Folsom Prison and San Quentin, where his unrepenting sincerity crashed up against the hardened prison walls only to find that they were a perfect fit.

Here, "Texas 1947" struggles between under- and over-statement, one minute restrained and the next

smothered beneath too many instruments, while "What Have You Got Planned Tonight, Diana?" suffers from a maudlin string section that does no favours as a background for Cash's already-sentimental singing. Later, "I Hardly Ever Sing Beer Drinking

Songs" sounds simply like Cash and the band are on autopilot—it might work in a northern saloon, with the piano rolls and Cash's straightforward delivery, but not here.

So, *Look at them Beans* really isn't a particularly good album—not from Cash, anyway. But even at his worst, there's something about the way Cash threw himself into every line, never holding back his emotions, that left you believing that he'd make it out the other side of the doldrums. And Cash certainly dropped his share of clunkers over the years, but he also managed to recover each time. And, sometimes, he even managed to raise his fist up in the face of absolute ridiculousness and stake a claim all his own, and that's exactly what he does with the title track, which is worth every effort it takes to track it down. ♥



HAIRY QUICK SPINS

WHITEY HOUSTON
quickspins@vuweekly.com

BURTON CUMMINGS ABOVE THE GROUND SONY/BMG

National Treasure
That dense, glorious plumage should be on our flag

21 TANDEM REPEATS NO JUNK MAIL PLEASE CANADA LYNX

Folk zombies go forth
Tear falls on Rheostat grave
Tielli eats brain

SHINY TOX GUNS SEASON OF POISON UNIVERSAL MOTOWN

Dark modern songsmiths
Quite fine if you like your rock
Glossy and gothy

JEDI MIND TRICKS A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IMPALPABLE

A giant phallus
Still relentlessly pumping
Now I have headache

SUZIE MCNEIL ROCK-A-ROLLER UNIVERSAL

If Hilary Duff
And Sheryl Crow mated ... Uh ...
I'd rent that movie

TRAVIS ODE TO J SMITH RED TELEPHONE BOX

They never quite hit
Across the pond as they say
But this is "smashing"

K-MARQ PERFECT STRANGER WARNER

French Hip Hop star
Makes English disc, brags about
Size of his baguette

HINDER TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC

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Beguiling good times

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The Black Dog

*I'd like to thank all of our Troops,
past & present for all they have done
& continue to do. Get home safe troops.*

Lest we forget

PREVIEW
FRI NOV 7 (8:30 PM)
THE GRASSROOT DEVIATION
WITH BRETT AXLES TRIO
TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE, \$15

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vancouverweekly.com

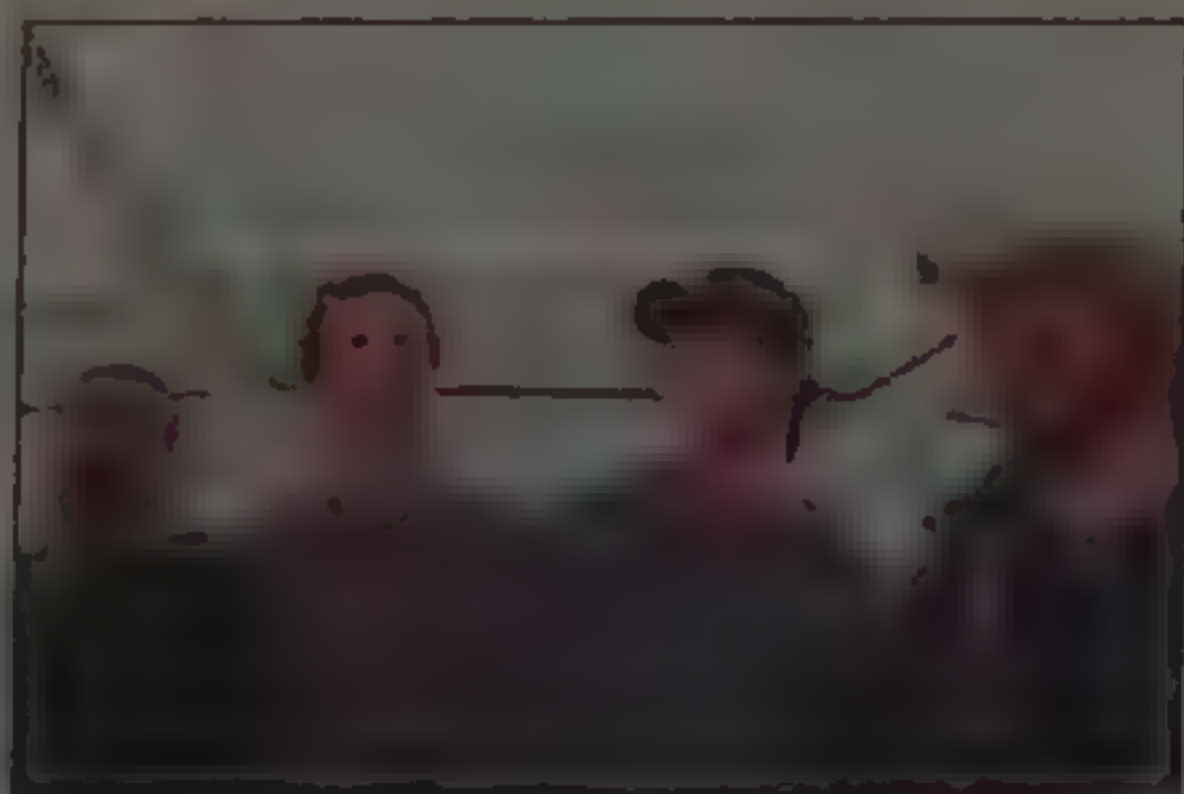
Even though birthdays are always cause for celebration, some tend to be more memorable than others. Edmonton's own jam band, the Grassroot Deviation is hoping that its fifth turn around the sun goes down in history.

This party will see its revelers launch from Earth and tour the galaxy and reach the edges of the universe. Sound fanciful? Sure, but when you set up a gig at the science centre, outfitted with lasers and the latest digital imagery, the whole thing becomes much more plausible.

"The band had been talking about doing something different for our fifth anniversary, just to change up the norm—which is we've been primarily a bar band and doing that across the country for a couple of years," guitarist and vocalist Brian Parker says. "I was at the science centre and basically, as soon as I walked into the theatre, I thought this would be a great idea."

The party planning has been in full swing for several months and Parker is understandably excited about the journey.

"Most people will not have seen projection like this because it's brand new technology. It really feels like you're in outer space a lot of the time. It's called a laser light show, but we have to try to convince people that this is more," he says. "I went in there to see a preview with a friend and the way



he described it was, even if this was *Colours of the Wind*, it would go, because the images are so awesome."

Now, with a band of Grassroot Deviation's nature, where the guys regularly drift off into musical digressions, it stands to reason that organizing a visual show around meandering songs might be technically difficult.

"The projectionist's familiar with some of the songs we're going to play in terms of their studio versions and we've gone over how these songs may differ, this section might be longer, this section might take more time, we might reduce this section, this section may get funky, may get rockin'—there's some open-endedness. We're ready for those," Parker explains. "Although we're doing some of those jams when they feel natural, our main operators or projectionists are going to be jamming along with us, making sure the visuals match the band."

The matching of the music and visuals will also tend to be more thematic than literal. Instead of outlining the beats of a drum with lasers, grittier jams couple with treks through the city, while space jams couple with journeys through the universe.

What a long, strange trip it'll be. ▾

Danks for the memories

PEI band stays focused on the moment

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vancouverweekly.com

Some advice for the musically astute: look east. Charlottetown, PEI is starting to carve its own little niche into the greater Canadian music scene. First came Two Hours Traffic, a sweet pop act that not only caught the eye of alt-rabble-rocker Joel Plaskett—who produced and played on the group's *Little Jabs* album—but also impressed Canadian rock critics, who honoured the group with a Polaris Prize nomination. And now, pulling up alongside that band is the Danks, a kindred group that's about to journey west of Toronto for the very first time.

The two bands share more than just common location, however: formative Danks history and mutual band members tie the two groups together. Before the Danks, soon-to-be-frontman Brohan Moore shared a living space with Traffic guitarist Alec O'Hanley, who helped him form the group.

"Alec and I were sharing that apartment, and I had done some home demos, just in my garage at my parents' house, and I released them just as a self-titled EP," says Moore. "He heard it, and he wanted to play a little bit. He played a little bit of keys on it,



PREVIEW

SUN, NOV 9 (8 PM)
THE DANKS
WITH TWO HOURS TRAFFIC, HEY ROSETTA!
THE WHITSUNDAYS
PEI MUSIC GROUP

and then we just decided we'd get the full band so we'd be able to play the songs live."

And so the Danks began, in what Moore laughingly describes as a "very cramped room," with Chris Dorion and Phil MacIsaac joining on bass and drums, respectively. Dorion's since been replaced with Andrew MacDonald, another member of Two Hours Traffic.

Moore admits that Two Hours Traffic's successes certainly haven't hurt his own band, but considering their overlap, he doesn't seem to dwell much on how the bands are affecting each other's progress.

"I don't really think in terms of that," he says. "We're playing with friends ... I live with Andy and Alec and we've been friends since grade six. I'm just having fun with my friends."

SINCE 2006, the Danks have played the *In A Light* EP, wowed some crowd at Toronto's North by Northeast Festival and, looking to the future, are set to promote the *Samples* EP on the road while a to-be-independently released full-length looms in the spring horizon. Though currently unsigned, Moore does admit that there's been a bit of label chatter regarding his band. But even though they've "spoken to some people," there are more pressing issues to get through before the band starts thinking about inking any contracts.

"We want to get touring, and get the record out first, before we start thinking about that stuff I think," he says. "So we're just trying to get [on] our feet right now." ▾

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

freewill@vancouverweekly.com

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

Uranus is on the opposite side of the sun from Saturn right now. To traditional astrologers, that's a stressful aspect. It bespeaks a titanic clash between the forces of progress and the inertia of the past. But there are mitigating factors. The expansive planet Jupiter is trine to Saturn and sextile to Uranus, suggesting that unexpected grace may provide beauty and healing during these strenuous moments of truth. I predict that's what will occur in your personal life, Aries. You're well-situated to navigate smartly through the brouhaha. For best results, respect the old ways, but not so much that it slows down your exuberant quest for the most interesting possible future.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

Every year my friend Jim travels to Cabos San Lucas in Baja California to participate in a deep-sea fishing competition. He says the best way to catch the big fish is with actual bait in the form of smaller fish. But marlins can be fooled into getting snagged with merely pretty lures—colourful fabrications that look like food but are actually made of metal, wood, plastic and rubber. Jim says that hammerhead sharks, on the other hand, will never bite the fake bait. They're too smart, insisting on the real thing. I suggest you use this information as an allegory in the coming weeks, Taurus. You may find it to your advantage to get yourself "caught" by a metaphorical fisher-

person, but only if he or she is offering you the authentic bait, not a simulation.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

When the air is pure and clean, a bee can smell a flower from 1000 metres. The presence of pollution severely cripples the bee's awareness of floral scents, however, reducing its range to 200 metres. Consider the possibility that this is a metaphor for what has been happening to you recently, Gemini. Have you suffered a reduction in your sensitivity to sources of nourishment? Are you oblivious to gifts and blessings that could be available to you if you only knew about them? According to my analysis of the astrological omens, this is quite possible. Luckily, you're reading this horoscope, which will surely motivate you to overcome the problem.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

Dolphins love erotic play, according to the book *Dolphin Chronicles*. For almost a third of their waking life, they caress and touch each other. They're ingenious about using their Frisbees, plastic boats, and rubber balls as sex toys. Gender isn't much of an issue. There's as much same-sex as opposite-sex cavorting. If you'd like to place yourself in alignment with cosmic rhythms, Cancerian, you will consider taking a page from the dolphin Kama Sutra in the coming days. Remember, the key for them is simply to play freely without any specific goal. Bliss comes as much from experimenting with creative intimacy as from driving toward orgasm.

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

One of my friends on Facebook describes her vocation as "Hammer of the Gods." Her task in life, she says, is to be a tool

that the divine powers wield as they nail together raw materials to make useful structures. While I don't know if that's also one of your long-range goals, Leo, I do know that it describes a role you'd thrive in during the coming weeks. So how about it? Are you ready to upgrade your game in order to be the best hammer of the gods you can possibly be?

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

I'm not necessarily suggesting that you read Al Franken's book *The Truth (with Jokes)*. But I do recommend that you make that title your motto in the coming week. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, there will be no such thing as truth without jokes, at least for you. Every situation you need to know more about will, if you investigate it, reveal some amusing riddle. All the information that'll be important for you to gather will lead you in the direction of laughter.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

Some years back, I maxed out my credit cards to pay for recording my band's CD. Soon afterwards, following a few financial setbacks, I was close to declaring bankruptcy. Luckily, my parents stepped in and bailed me out. (Thanks, Mom and Dad!) Since then, I've rigorously kept my debts to a minimum. That policy has, on occasion, cramped my style, but it looks pretty wise in light of the current financial crunch. Please draw inspiration from my experience, Libra. Take inventory of any patterns in your own life that may be distorting your ability to get the money and resources you need. This is an excellent time to flush your old conditioning and imprint yourself with good, new habits.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

"Many times in my life," says philosopher Eckhardt Tolle, "it has been my experience that the most powerful starting point for any endeavour is not the question 'What do I want?' but what does Life (God, Consciousness) want from me? How do I serve the whole?" I offer that meditation to you, Scorpio, as you slip into the heart of the reinvent yourself phase of your cycle. It's time to stage a grand reopening, launch a new (relation)ship, or instigate a fresh batch of good trouble. As you whip up the initiatory energy, ask the Big Cosmic Thou where it would like you to go and what it would love you to do.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

"Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth," says Ishmael in Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*, "whenever it is damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses ... it [is] high time to get to the sea as soon as I can." Use this passage as an inspirational kick-in-the-ass, Sagittarius. There's no need for you to sink into the emotional abyss Ishmael describes. Fix yourself before you're broken! Get to the sea immediately, and prevent the grey glumness from taking over. If there's no ocean nearby, then try the next best things: walk along a river or lake. Immerse yourself for long stretches in baths and saunas and heated pools. Cry and sweat and come abundantly. Listen to music that makes you feel like you're floating.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

This is the Week of the Upside-Down Rainbow. It's a time when signs of good fortune are everywhere, but always with some odd

twist or anomalous feature. Should you worry that the tweaks mean there's some mischief at work? Does it suggest you will have to pay a price for the breakthroughs that are coming? I don't think so. My interpretation of the upside-down rainbow (or the five-leaf clover or the torn \$10 bill you find on the street) is that you will be asked to expand your capacities in order to take full advantage of the unusual blessings.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Should you go with the flow or should you try to wheedle, manipulate and entice the flow to go with you? This is one of those rare times when I advocate the latter approach. The flow is currently in an indecisive state, when it could go one of several different ways. You have cosmic authorization to nudge it in the direction that looks to you like it will be the best for the most people.

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

In the sci-fi film *The Matrix*, a small band of people have managed to escape from the collective hallucination that most of their fellow humans are stuck inside. Though life is hard staying free, there are some perks. They can, for instance, get downloads of data directly into their brains that allow them to quickly master complex tasks. In this way, the heroine, Trinity, learns to fly a helicopter in a few minutes. I call your attention to these fictional events, Pisces, because I think you're close to pulling off real-life accomplishments that resemble them. First, you're in an excellent position to slip away from certain illusions that enslave some of the people around you. Second, you have an enormous power to rapidly understand new information and acquire new skills. ▾

EVENTS WEEKLY

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CLUBS/LECTURES

THE ATHABASCA TAR SANDS: THREATS & OPPORTUNITIES' DISCUSSION WITH MIKE NUDEMA (GREENPEACE) Westwood Unitarian Congregation, 11135 - 65 Ave • Mike will speak about the environmental threat represented by the Tar Sands developments and what Albertans are doing to bring about a transition in the province. • Nov 9 (10:30am) • Free

AWA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr, Bishop St, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet every Mon including holidays (7:30pm)

CANADA AFTER BUSH: WHAT IS AT STAKE? Strathcona Community League Hall (lounge), 10139 - 87 Ave • Our country is entering a new political moment with the re-election of Stephen Harper, and the U.S. presidential election. • Nov 11 (7:30pm) • Free

CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 11205-101 St (780-479-1999) • Basketball: Mon (5-7pm) • Healing Circle: Mon (6-8pm) • Boxing: Mon/Thu (7-9pm), Tue (5-7pm) • Volleyball: Tue (6-8pm) • Sewing Circle: Tue (6-10pm) • Beadwork Class: Wed (6-8pm) • C.N.F.C. Pow-wow: Wed (6-9pm) • Hip-Hop Class: every Thu (5-7pm) • Cree Class: Thu (6-9pm) • Elders and Residency: Fri (all day) • Safe Using and Harm Reduction: last Fri every month (11am-12pm) • Tobacco Reduction: every Fri (1-2pm) • Drop-in Night: Fri (6-8pm)

CARDIO-CORE-YOGA Rosedale near Telus field • All ages and levels are invited to try a new rejuvenating & relaxing exercise program • Mon-Thu (6:30-7:30am & 12:05-12:50pm) • Sign up: bewell2008@gmail.com; Info: (780-908-9355)

CHESS Edmonton Chess Club and Society of Alberta Chess Knights (780-474-2318) • Learn to play chess; opportunities for all ages including classes, school programs and tournaments • rovingchessnuts@shaw.ca

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY CONSERVATION Citadel Rice Theatre • A public debate with Edward O. Wilson, Harvard professor and Pulitzer Prize winner, considered by many to be the father of the modern environmental movement, and David Schindler, Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta. • Nov 16 (2-3:30pm)

EDMONTON ESPERANTO SOCIETY 1pm, room 1812, 10025 102A Ave (780-702-5117) • Fri (noon - 1pm) • vaughn@sawardconsulting.com

EDMONTON POTTERS' BUILD 56TH ANNUAL POTTERY SHOW & SALE Stanley A. Milner Library, 100A St & 102 Ave (780-426-5642) • Here's your opportunity to try out this centuries old art form, watch some masters demonstrate various pottery-making techniques • Sat Nov 8 (11am - 3pm) • donations to Edmonton Food Bank accepted

FREE YOGA Lululemon Athletica, Kingsway security entrance 2 (780-471-1200) • All levels welcome, new styles each week, mats provided • Every Sun (6-7pm)

FROM CHADS TO PEACE MEN'S GROUP Location TBA: (780-486-5886 or 780-944-5466) • A free 8 session work group for men who have experienced mental, emotional, verbal, physical, or financial abuse from their partner • Thu evenings; Through Dec 18 (6:30-8:30pm) • Free

GREAT EXPEDITIONS HOSTEL TRAVEL SLIDE SHOWS Hostelling International, 10647-81 Ave (780-454-6216/780-455-6741) • Meet the 2nd Mon every month (7:30pm) • UGANDA, SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAZILAND (2008): presentation by Vicki Strang of Grandmothers (of Canada) to Grandmothers (of Africa) • Nov 10 • Free

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860-57 Ave (780-469-9776/780-452-6224/780-962-6561) • Featuring presentations, speakers, workshops, outings, and competitions. All levels of photographers welcome • Meet the 2nd and 4th Thu each month; Sept-May (8pm); Dec has only one meeting on the 2nd Thu of the month • www.imagesab.com

JEFF HOLMWOOD ART TALK Stanley A. Milner Theatre, downstairs, Edmonton Public Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square • The ASA in partnership with the EPL is presenting this free talk • Thu Nov 6 (7pm)

JITTERBUG SWING DANCE McKernan Hall, 11341-78 Ave (780-604-7572) • Come to the Sugar Foot Stomp and dance swing, jive, charleston, and lindy hop all night long • Every Sat night; Beginner lesson at 8pm, dance from 9pm-1am; info at dance@thesugarfoot.com

LAUGH FOR LIFE GALA SOCIETY FUNDRAISER The Winspear Centre (780-463-1189) www.LaughtforLife.ca • Tim Hawkins/Bob Stromberg host a silent and a live auction as part of the hilarious evening to raise funds for The Mustard Seed & Candee Housing Association • Nov 7 • \$30 adv; \$35 door

MEDITATION • Geshe Sanzen Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society, 11403-101 St (780-479-0014) www.gadensantenling.org; Kushok Lobsang Dhamchoe; beginner Tue (7pm); intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization**, 208, 10132-105 St (780-425-1050) www.bkwsu.org; Raja Yoga Meditation • **Meditation and Buddhist practices** 10502-70 Ave, www.karmatshuling.ca (780-633-6157) with Tibetan tradition Lama Ani Kunsang. Beginners welcome, instruction available; free; Wed (7pm)

MEN & RELATIONSHIPS WEEKEND (780-944-5542) • Aimed at men wrestling with relationships, intimacy, communication, parenting, separation/divorce or who feel

empty or alone • Nov 7-9 • Call for more info or to register

THE MORAL OF THE STORY: ART, CULTURE, MEDIA AND POLITICS U of A Campus: Horowitz Lounge, SUB and Maier Learning Centre, ETL (780-492-8558) • Why is it that people often vote against their best interests? This conference will explore this question and ways that creative people have addressed it. • Nov 14-16 • www.ualberta.ca/parkland/

PAST THE TIPPING POINT-THE COMING POST SUSTAINABILITY WORLD? Engineering Teaching and Learning Complex, 116 St - 91 Ave • focus on the public policy and planning implications of global environmental trends and the necessary ecological conditions for sustainable socioeconomic development • Nov 14 (10-11am)

RISEING SUN THEATRE WORKSHOP (TAKING NEW MEMBERS NOW) SKILLS, 10408-124 St (780-484-2203) • Edmonton's theatre of alternatively-abled actors. Weekly workshops for both new and current members. The new play will have a satiric western style and will be written with and for the group • Mon nights through Nov; (7-9 pm)

SCARRED LANDS & WOUNDED LIVES: THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF WAR Steeps Tea Lounge College Plaza, 11116 - 82nd Ave • Part of the "Thoughtful Tuesday" film/documentary series • Nov 11 (7pm) • Free

SENIORS ASSISTED TRANSPORTATION SOCIETY OF GREATER EDMONTON OPEN HOUSE 9907 - 108 Ave (780-732-1221) • This open house is designed to show off our new address. We want to share our happiness, with our new space, give you a newsletter, run our new video, etc. • Fri Nov 7

STORIES OUT OF SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM Inner City High School, 9515 - 104 Ave (780-424-9425) • A forum for the discussion of educational theory, research & practice and to explore the impact on our students which explores the space where academic research intersects with student's experience • Registration & Inner City High School Open House; Thu Nov 6 (4-6pm) • Keynote: Hon. Dave Hancock, Alberta Minister of Education; Fri Nov 7

THOUGHTFUL TUESDAYS Steeps Tea Lounge, 11116 - 82 Ave (780-988-8105) • **SCARRED LANDS & WOUNDED LIVES:** The Environmental Footprint of War. A documentary on the ecological consequences of warfare in Bosnia, Sudan and Iraq. When we make war, we destroy not only the enemy, we destroy our earth as well. • Nov 11 (7pm) • Free

TOASTMASTERS CLUBS • Chamber Toastmasters Club: Chamber of Commerce, 600, 9990 Jasper Ave (780-459-5206); Thu (6pm) • **MacEwan:** Grant MacEwan College, Rm 7-297E, 10700-104 Ave (780-633-3921); Fri (noon-1pm) • **Norators Toastmasters Club:** Londonderry Public Library www.norators.com; Wed (7-8:45pm) • **Norwood Toastmasters Club:** Kingsway Legion, 10425 Kingsway Avenue, (780-456-3334) www.norwoodtoastmasters.org; Thu (8-10pm.) • **Power Speakers:** Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts, Rm 437, 10045-156 St (780-459-0642); Wed (7-9pm) • **Pursuers:** Best Western Cedar Park Inn, 5116 Gateway Boulevard (780-457-0808); Wed (7-9pm) • **Chanticleer:** Kingsway Rm, Millard Health Building, 131 Airport Rd (780-498-4608/474-1138) Thu (7-8:30am) • **Upward Bound:** Rm 601 Norquest College 10215-108St. (780-488-4098 or 780-454-3720) adamsrk@telus.net; Wed (7-8:30pm)

TUESDAY TREATS Free invitation every Tuesday evening (7-9pm) Middle aged models (men and women) of all shapes and sizes are requested to help demonstrate beauty product benefits; beautifulyou2008@gmail.com; (780-909-9355)

VISITING SPEAKER LECTURE SERIES Fine Arts Building • The Art Practice of Catherine Richards • Nov 13 (5-7pm)

VQA MONTHLY POTLUCK DINNER Riverdale Hall, 9231 - 100 Ave; www.VofA.ca • Come and meet like minded people who also care about personal health, the environment and animals. Please bring a Vegetarian, Vegan or Raw Food dish suitable for at least 8 people. Cutlery and plates in short supply, please bring your own. • Nov 9 (5:30-7:30pm) • \$3 members, \$5 non-members

WELCOME TO THE REEL WORLD Civil Engineering Building (CEB) 325, www.iveek.ualberta.ca • Global issues film and speaker series • Tangier Treehouse: Offers a timely and intimate window into the world of Arab youth. Explores the borders between North Africa and the West, between the Arab world and America, and between those who have and those who have not. • Nov 12 (5pm)

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat (10-11am) every month, stand in silence for a world without violence

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR WATERSHEDS Fort Edmonton Park • A one day conference focused on improving watershed stewardship through better collaboration • Nov 7 (9:30am-4:30pm) • Free • www.albertaeotrust.com/watershedprotectors

QUEER LISTINGS

AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Sunnybrook United Church, Red Deer (403-347-6073) • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies meet the 2nd Tue (7pm) every month

BOOTS BAR AND LOUNGE 10242 106 St. www.boots-bar.ca (780-423-5014) • 2nd Thursday: Illusions Social Club • 3rd Wednesday: Edmonton Q Society • 2nd Tuesday: Edmonton Rainbow Business Association • Every Friday: Philosophy Cafe • Friday and Saturday DJ SeXXXy Sean 10-3 • Long Weekend Sundays feature the Stardust Lounge with Miss Bianca and Vanity Fair

BUDDYS NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave (780-488-7735) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDiva and Donnatella NE1 in The GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ

WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ SeXXXy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common social interests meet the 2nd Sun (2:30pm) of most months for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. email edmontonpt@yahoo.ca, www.primetimerswww.org edmonton

EXPOSURE 2008 www.exposurefestival.ca • A nine-day festival covering a huge array and virtually all disciplines of arts and queer culture • Nov 14 - 22

GILBY SPORTS AND RECREATION www.teamedmonton.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton; Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St (780-465-3620); Wed (6-7:30pm) • Bootcamp; Lynnwood Elementary School at 15451- 84 Ave; Mon (7-8:15pm); bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling: Gateway Lanes, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd; Sat (5-7pm); bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Curling: Mon (7:15-9:15pm); Granite Curling Club; (780-463-5942) • Running: Sun, Tue, Thu; running@teamedmonton.ca • Swimming: NAIT pool, 11762-106 St; Tue (8-9pm), Thu (7:30-8:30pm); swimming@teamedmonton.ca • Volleyball: Tue - Recreational; Mother Teresa Elementary School at 9008-105A (8-10pm); Thu -Intermediate: Amiskiwaciy Academy, 101 Airport Road (8-10pm); recvolleyball@teamedmonton.ca; volleyball@teamedmonton.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Yoga; every Sun (2-3:30pm); Korezone Fitness, #203, 10575-115 St. yoga@teamedmonton.ca

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB Boots, 10242-106 St (780-387-3343) • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet 2nd Thu each month http://groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton_illusions/

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu every month (fall/winter terms): Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kwells@ualberta.ca)

KOREZONE FITNESS #203, 10575-115 Street • **LIVING POSITIVE** 404, 10408-124 St. www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/780-488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue (7-9pm): Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculty St. Jean, Rm 3-18 (780-490-7332) • Program for HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) every month • Free (member/\$10 (membership) • Pre-registered

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

PRAG Pride Centre, 9540-111 Ave • A support group for parents and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people • Meet the 1st Wed each month September-June (7-9pm); T: Ruby 780-436-1998 (after 6pm); E: edmontonab@pflagcanada.ca

PLAY NIGHT CLUB 10220-103 St. www.playnightclub.ca • Open Thu, Fri, Sat • The first bar for the queer community to open in a decade with DJs Alex Brown and Eddie Toonflash

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111 Ave www.pridecentreofedmonton.org (780-488-3234) • Open Tue-Fri 1-10pm, Sat 2-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in: Meet every Tue/Thu (2-4pm) • CA: Meet every Thu (7pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group meet every Sat (noon) • Youth Understanding Youth: Youth up to 25 years, support and social group meet every Sat (7-9pm); yuy@shaw.ca • Womospace: Board meeting 1st Sun each month (10:30am-12:30pm) • Trans Education/Support Group: Meet the 1st and 3rd Sun (2-4pm) of each month; www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Meet every Sun (7pm); facilitator: Rob Wells robwells780@hotmail.com • HIV Support Group: Meet the 2nd Mon of each month (7pm) • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning (TTIQ) Alliance; Support meeting the 2nd Tue each month (7-9pm) • Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning. Education, advocacy and support for men, women and youth; PFLAG Edmonton: Meet the 1st Wed each month (7pm) • Free short-term, solution-focused drop-in counselling; every Wed (7-10pm) • YouthSpace: drop-in for LGBTQ for youth up to 25; Tue-Sat (3-7pm)

ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10209-123 St (780-482-1587) www.rwuc.org • Soul OUTing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship • 3rd Sun every month (7pm); worship Sun (10:30am); people of all sexual orientations welcome. A LGBT monthly book club and a bi-monthly film night. Call for more info or email jravenscroft@rwuc.org

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 11526-76 Ave (780-436-1555) • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

WOMONSPACE www.womospace.ca, womospace@gmail.com (780 482 1794) • A Non-profit lesbian social organization for Edmonton and surrounding area. Organized monthly activities from dances, games nites, golf tournament, etc. Monthly newsletter and reduced rates included with membership. Confidentiality assured.

WOODYS 11723 Jasper Ave (780-488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tuzzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

SPECIAL EVENTS

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A UGANDAN CHILD Edmonton

Golf and Country Club, 6201 Country Club Road (Dress Code: No Denim please) (780-420-1757) • Photo Exhibit featuring photos taken independently by 20 Ugandan children, providing a glimpse into their everyday lives. Also a silent auction/sale of unique and interesting pieces of arts, crafts, jewelry, decor, etc. all bought from local vendors in Uganda. • Nov 9 (6-8:30pm) • \$10

AUTUMN ISSUES RELEASE PARTY • theARTery, 9535-Jasper Ave • Performances by The DB Buxton Revue and Jesse Dee and Jacqueline B with art by Tim Rechner, Alexis Labarda, Rianne Ireland, Paula Sommers, Amy Sallenbach, Kevin Law, Kurt Gallop, Ashley Mackenzie, Jess Hogan & Santino Pasutto • Nov 8 (8pm) • Free

CELTIC REMEMBRANCE: A CELEBRATION FOR PEACE The Haven Social Club, 15120A Story Plain Road (780-716-2106) • Andy Donnelly, Stephen's Green, John Speam, plus Art Displays, gala presentations, and auctions as hosted by Night of Artists very own Phil Alain • Nov 8 (8pm) • Tickets (780-756-8010) • \$20

EVENING IN TIBET, SILENT AUCTION Westmount Hall, 10970-127 St (780-451-9178) • Tantalize your sense of taste by experiencing cuisine provided by the celebrated New Asian Village. Our Silent Auction is an unrivaled array of goods and services perhaps for an early Christmas present or "just because" • Sat Nov 8 (6:30pm) • \$35

FESTIVAL OF IDEAS: FEAR & HAPPINESS IN THE MODERN WORLD Various locations; www.festival-ofideas.ca • Join Salman Rushdie, Edward O. Wilson, Jaime Lerner, Will Alsop, Thomas King, and many others as we celebrate the excitement of ideas! • Nov 13 & 14 • Free

GLOBAL VISIONS FILM FESTIVAL Paramount Theatre, Stanley A Milner Library Theatre, Zeidler Hall (Metro Cinema) at the Citadel (780-414-1052) www.globalvisions-festival.com • A showcase of films • Nov 6 - 9 • \$10 (individual screenings)/\$8 (students/seniors/ members)/\$80 (Festival Superpass)/\$50 (Festival Six Pack)

JUST IN TIME: FAIR TRADE CHRISTMAS SALE Star of the North Retreat Centre 3A St. Vital Ave., St. Albert (780-459-5511) • Build justice into your purchasing and make a difference in someone's life! • Nov 9 (10am-3pm)

KIDS TAKE OVER THE CARROT ARTS MARKET The Carrot, 9351-118 Ave (780-481-9015) • For kids between the ages of 5 and 18 who like to create and do things like paint, sew, draw, carve, make jewellery or other crafty like things • Sat Nov 8 (11am - 3pm)

MAXIMIZING IMPACT CONFERENCE Fort Edmonton Park • 2 full days of top-quality information and expertise tailored for environmental organizations & citizens at large • Nov 8 & 9 (8:30am - 5 pm) • \$65 • register at <http://www.albertaeotrust.com/mi2008>

ONE STOP HOLIDAY SHOP Cosmos' One Stop Holiday Shop, 7 Tache St., St. Albert (780-406-0601) • Over 20 vendors in one place, at one time. Come & visit us, finish your holiday shopping & treat yourself to an afternoon of fun! All proceeds go to the fight against Diabetes • Nov 9 • 11am-3pm • \$2

OTHER VOICES AND NOTEBOOK MAGAZINE FALL ISSUES PARTY The Artery, 9535 Jasper Ave; www.othervoices.ca; www.notebookmagazine.ca • Musical performances by The DB Buxton Revue and Jesse Dee. Come together to support your local purveyors of the finest poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and art of all sorts. • Sat Nov 8 (8pm) • Free

RUTHERFORD HOUSE REMEMBERS 11153 - Sask Dr. • In remembrance of the efforts women made on the home front during World War I • Nov 9 (noon-4pm)

SCIENCE SATURDAY FOR KIDS U of A in the Earth Sciences Building off of Saskatchewan Drive • An afternoon of discovery for kids ages 5 to 12 • Nov 15 (12-4pm)

SPEAK OUT EDMONTON FOR JUSTICE - OMAR KHAIR Sir Winston Churchill Square, 102nd Avenue and 100th Street • Gather in the Square to hear music, talk to one another and show your support • Nov 8 (6pm) • Free

VIGIL OF REMEMBRANCE Edmonton, Legislature Building, north steps • Pays unique and poignant tribute to the fallen Canadian soldiers of World War I and commemorates the 90th anniversary of the end of the "War to end all wars." • Through Nov 11 (5pm - sunrise)

THE THIRD ANNUAL WINTER WINE FESTIVAL Liquor Select, 8924 149 St • Presented by The Old Strathcona Youth Society. Over two dozen different bottles of wine, something sure to please every palate • Wed Nov 12 (6:30-9pm) • \$40

COMEDY

COMEDY FACTORY Gateway Entertainment Centre, 34th Ave., Calgary Trail • Thu (8:30pm); Sat (8 & 10pm) • Alycia Cooper Nov 6-8 • Lorenzo Thornton Nov 13-15

COMIC STRIP Bourbon St in West Edmonton Mall (780-483-5999), www.thecomicstrip.ca • Hit or Miss Mondays: Each Mon • Alternative Tuesdays: Each Tue • Michael Somerville; Nov 12 - 16

LAUGH FOR LIFE GALA SOCIETY FUNDRAISER The Winspear Centre • Comedians Tim Hawkins/Bob Stromberg at the 5th annual **LAUGH FOR LIFE GALA**. A silent and a live auction are part of the hilarious evening to raise funds for The Mustard Seed & Candee Housing Association • Nov 7 • \$30 in advance, \$35 at door

THE LAUGH SHOP 1105 - 6606 137 Ave, Londonderry Mall (780-476-1010), www.thelaughshop.ca Sun-Fri (8pm); Sat (8 & 10:30pm) • Wednesdays are amateur nights Showtime 8pm; Kevin Stobo from Calgary Nov 6 • Howie Miller; Nov 13 • Johnny Bagpipes Johnston; Nov 14 & 15

LION'S HEAD PUB Radisson Hotel, 4440 Gateway Blvd • Comedy Night: Hosted by Lars Callieou featuring professional and amateur comedians • Every Sun (9pm) • No cover

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Goin' to the chapel?

1987 QUEERMONTON

TAMARA GORZALKA
tam@vancouverweekly.com

When I told a friend that this week's column was going to be about gay marriage, she asked why. It's an outdated concept, she said. A lot of people have a similar reaction, questioning whether marriage is even something worth fighting for. But it has recently become a hot topic among gays and queer media, after the US election kicked up a storm of discussion on the issue.

I don't know that I'm ever going to want to get married. It wasn't something I spent much time considering when I was younger. Things change of course—I fell in love for the first time and marriage became a possibility. I don't know if it's a right that I will ever need to exercise, but that doesn't mean that I don't want it available to me if I do decide to use it.

I don't know if I'll ever want to adopt, but I want to have the option. I don't know if I'll ever need to use hate crime or anti-discrimination laws, but I need those available to me. And more importantly, we don't fight for rights only because they affect us personally, or at least we shouldn't.

Some of the ads for No on Proposition 8 (the campaign to defeat a gay marriage ban in California) feature a conversation between two women, one "unsure" of her feelings towards gay marriage, with her friend pointing out that she "may not be sure, but does she want to take the right away from others?"

It's clumsily delivered but it's a good point. Sixteen thousand couples have been married in California since the ban was overturned. Now homophobes in the state are trying to take that away, despite the fact that those marriages haven't exactly tainted any straight marriages or made Californian society crumble.

In Canada we've become complacent about same-sex marriage, with many feeling the gay activist fight is over, as if marriage were our last remaining struggle, no matter the bullying and violence that still go on or the lack of any momentum whatsoever in the transgender rights movement. Gay marriage has been viewed in most modern societies as the last struggle—apparently we become truly equal when we can be brides and grooms.

Is same-sex marriage really safe in Canada? Our prime minister did vow to revisit the fight two elections ago, a

threat he thankfully dropped because of lack of support in the House of Commons. Our fearless leader is, after all, a man who voted against making violence against queers a hate crime. If he doesn't want to protect us from physical harm, he's probably still not very pleased about our unions. Who knows what a vote now, with a stronger minority government, could reflect. And God forbid a Conservative majority in the future.

So how do the marriage amendments in the US affect us? It doesn't take a genius to note that shifts in American politics are often mirrored in Canada. They've got Iraq, we've got Afghanistan. They have their national security and terror threats, we bump up our borders and toughen immigration. They privatize, we privatize.

I was lucky to have the chance to check out the documentary *Saving Marriage* in a little art house theatre in San Francisco. The documentary chronicles the fight to keep gay marriage legal in Massachusetts. One of the more poignant segments of the movie came when a Republican who had written a bill that created a "separate but equal" civil union had a change of heart and removed his name from it. He learned, as so many politicians have, that gay marriages had been going on for months and society had remained pretty much the same.

BARACK OBAMA and Joe Biden have

come out against marriage amendments, but that was early in the campaign and neither have been prone to mention it of late. State and national Democratic groups have donated to organizations working to defeat the marriage bans, but have so far donated a lot less than celebrities and marriage-rights organizations. Steven Spielberg and Brad Pitt have donated four times as much as the Democratic National Committee.

John McCain had previously come out against marriage amendments in general, but has since reversed his position and is encouraging the bans.

Of course, Barack Obama doesn't support gay marriage, although he is for domestic partnerships. This, he says, is due to his religious faith. He also says that while he will consider looking at his position again in the future, for now he thinks it's more important to fight for non-discrimination laws.

I lost a lot of respect for Barack Obama in August 2007 when he appeared at Logo's presidential debate on queer issues. When asked about marriage his response was, "Look, when my parents got married in 1961, it would have been illegal for them to be married in a number of states in the South," before he trailed off. It seemed he had a hard time justifying why gays couldn't marry if his parents had similar problems. Eventually he picked himself up, saying, "So, obviously,

this is something that I understand intimately. It's something that I care about."

One of the most impassioned pleas against gay marriage is in regards to children and school. The fear, it seems, is that kids will be taught gay marriage. The horror! While I don't understand that concern in any way, it also turns out to not actually be true. Marriage falls under sex education and schools in the United States are not required to teach comprehensive sex ed. All parents are guaranteed the right to review the material their children will be learning and they can excuse them from any or all of it.

California Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell put it plainly: "There is nothing about Prop 8 that is connected to public education in any way. There is nothing in California state law that would require the teaching of marriage in any of its forms."

Of course by the time you read this, the American election will be over and we'll know if an administration that will be a little nicer to the gays has taken over. We'll know whether marriage bans have been voted in. All I can do as I write this is hope Americans make the right decision and protect their queer brothers and sisters.

Hopefully they'll look inside themselves and realize that when the campaign's biggest celebrity endorser is Chuck Norris, perhaps they're on the wrong side. **v**

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ARTIST TO ARTIST

Bullet Productions needs actors with good improv skills for ongoing plays. Good pay, no rehearsals and lots of fun. Contact Darcy 780-203-1712

Cast needed for short experimental film.
No pay, shooting early December.
For more info, contact: leon_cdc@hotmail.com

Open Casting Call

Actors needed for short films. Various Roles. 18-45yrs. Male & Female. 10am-5pm. Nov 1. NAIT HP Centre, Rm. W116. (780-264-0099 for more info) andrewsilke@gmail.com

ADFA Edmonton Region invites entries for *Stage Struck! One-Act Play Festival*, March 6/7, 2009, Waverdale Playhouse. Previously produced or new works, 10-60 minutes. Deadline Nov 30. xzDetails/registration, Mary-Ellen Perley.

780-481-3716 or mperley@shaw.ca

The Alberta Student Film Festival 2009 has opened its call for submissions. To enter your film or for info visit asfilmfest.ca or email asfilmfest@gmail.com

Gallery at Milner call for submissions
Deadline: Oct. 18. More info: 780-496-7030

The Works Festival—Calls to Enter • Churchill Square 2009 Artisan Market and Food Street Vendors. Reduced rates if you apply by Feb. 15, 2009. Contact dawn@theworks.ab.ca for more info. **Deadline: Apr. 15, 2009** • Churchill Square 2009 Street Stage. **Deadline: Feb. 15, 2009** • 2011 exhibit **Deadline: Aug. 25, 2009** • 2nd Annual Chalk Art Contest. Prizes are awarded on Canada Day, base your entry on the 2009 Festival theme HEAT! **Deadline: June 1, 2009** • 2nd Annual Smaller than a Breadbox. Base your entry on the 2009 Festival theme HEAT! **Deadline: May 1, 2009** • Download applications at www.theworks.ab.ca

Festival organizations in Northern Alberta (north of Highway 16 corridor) are encouraged to apply for the TransAlta Festival City Mentorship/Partnership Grant. Info and application forms available from the Edmonton Arts Council website: www.edmontonarts.ab.ca or call Sally Kim at the Edmonton Arts Council 780-424-2787, ext 226

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Going topless

ADVICE **ALT.SEX.COLUMN**
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Andrea's out of town this week, so here's one from the archives to tide you over.

DEAR ANDREA:

My girlfriend is really into BDSM. At first I tried and played a convincing (I think) top/dom, but it just wasn't hot for me so I looked some stuff up to get inspired and as I was reading/watching I would really get off on it, but the sex with my girlfriend still wasn't hot. Then I realized that when I was masturbating to all this I was fantasizing about subbing. Oops. I am way in love with my girlfriend but she is a bottom. Period. She might switch it around if it

meant a lot to me but I would know that it wasn't really making her happy. I don't know what to do. Can I become a top? Can I teach myself to like it? I'm going to do it either way but I really want to get into it, so please help! I want us to be good in bed together but two bottoms don't make a top. Help!

LOVE, TOPLESS

DEAR TOPS:

I was just thinking about this last night when a friend was catching me up on her latest dating adventures. She was lamenting that some potential dates seem to come equipped with a set of kinks perfectly matching her own, and though that sounds good it is of course no use at all. As you have discovered to your frustration, one wants a date with a complimentary set of kinks, not a matching one. It's

not an uncommon problem, and its most common manifestation is exactly the one that's driving you nuts: there are too many bottoms in this world and nowhere near enough tops to keep them satisfied. Why this is (beyond the fact that topping is hard work) I couldn't tell you for sure but I bet any number of eager grad students are currently proposing theses on the subject to bored advisors who have read enough similar stuff already.

Here's my theory: there are people for whom BDSM is a core part of their identity, running as deep as, say, homosexuality or monogamy. Some may always have recognized this element in themselves, even before they had the language to express it (these are the kids who always want to play pirates or whatever game involves somebody getting tied to something or intentional infliction/receiving of pain, even when the other kids are long since ready to move on). Others don't realize it until they're exposed to SM in some more adult context, but then it just clicks in, key into lock, and they know. Your girlfriend sounds like one of these

BDSM lifers, who tend, in my experience, to be pretty set on their preferred role even if they do switch experimentally on occasion (a good idea, if only to find out how painful/exhausting it is to experience/produce any particular sensation).

Then there are the "anything goes" people, who are happy to pick up a flogger or don a dog collar, what the heck, as long as it's fun. This type of player may not identify as an SM person per se, but may just enjoy a little power exchange on the occasional Friday night, no biggie. You may fall more on this end of the spectrum, but even "what-the-heckers" will usually discover some sort of preference, as you have. Most people do have a preference. The perfect 50/50 switch is almost certainly as rare as the perfect 50/50 bisexual, but plenty of people find something to like in either role. I do think you can develop an appreciation for topping and get some satisfaction out of a job well done (there are resources like The New Topping Book by Dossie Easton and Janet Hardy to help you with this), but you can enjoy and get good at it

without every really becoming a top the way both of you are currently bottoms. But be careful about taking on a role that isn't really "you." Nobody loves a martyr, and you're still going to want to bottom sometimes. I worry about you starting to resent your girlfriend for getting to have all the fun.

I have a suggestion which might save your relationship or might strike you as all sorts of wrong and make you hate me, but here goes: you guys find a willing top, maybe somewhere in your extant social circle, maybe online or by joining a BDSM social organization, and bottom together sometimes. This kind of shared adventure can be hot hot hot and very bonding, sort of like getting lost in the woods together and surviving through mutual trust and inter-reliance but a lot more fun. I think if you do that sometimes, and play top sometimes, and stick with the vanilla sometimes, you'll probably be OK, provided you both take care of getting your itches scratched. Love conquers ... much.

LOVE, ANDREA

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